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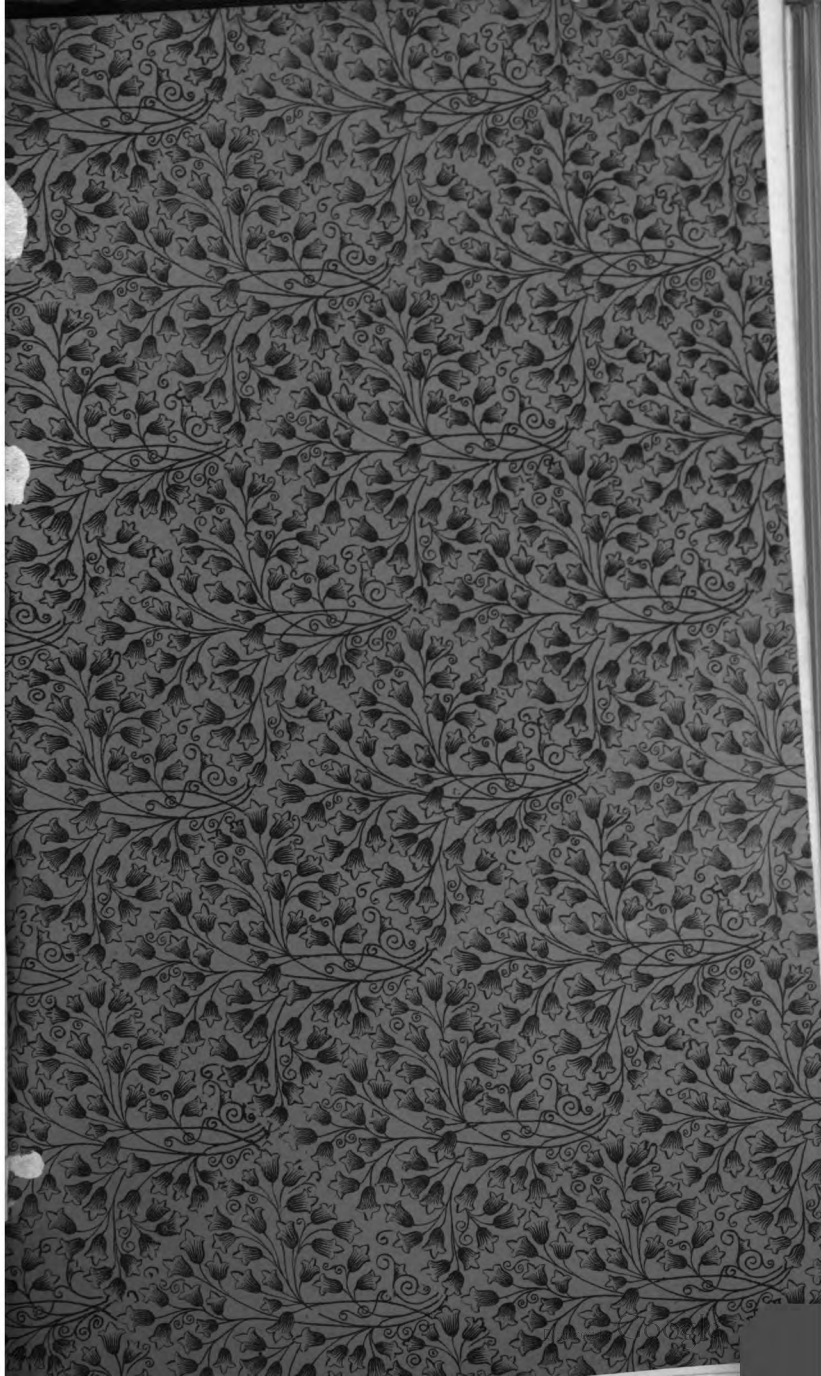


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To

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THE MARABLE FAMILY.

A NOVEL.

BY

SHALER HILLYER.

"Let us lift up our eyes unto the hills,
Whereon our new life lies;
That life which arches o'er this life of ours,
As o'er the earth the skies."

ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO.

PHILADELPHIA:
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1879.

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THE MARABLE FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST.

ABOUT three miles north of the little city of Rome, in the State of Georgia, was Innisfel, the residence of Mr. Philip Marable. The dwelling, a large, square, two-storied building, and with a colonnade in front, stood upon an eminence on the east side of the road, and removed from it about one hundred and fifty yards. In front was a lawn sloping down to the road, covered with a thick carpet of grass and shaded by a grove of oaks. Through the centre of this lawn a broad carriage-drive led from the high gate at the road up to a smaller gate opening into a flower-garden, which lay around the front part of the house. The grounds were well kept, and the whole aspect of the place evinced a cultivated taste in its owner, as well as ample means to gratify that taste.

Philip Marable's family, at the date of this story, consisted of his wife and three children, two sons and a daughter. The sons, Julian and Paul, were respectively fourteen and twelve years of age; the daughter, Bertha, was in her ninth year.

Mr. Marable possessed a large and valuable plantation, lying east of his residence and along the banks of the Oostanaula River. He left his planting interests altogether in the hands of his steward, a man whom he had found faithful in all respects, and at the same time humane towards his slaves.

Physically, Mr. Marable was well developed; in stature he was a little above the average, and though he had reached the age when men begin to grow corpulent, yet he still preserved that proper mean between corpulency and leanness which is

necessary to both grace and strength. His hair and beard were well streaked with gray, and there were some furrows in his calm, grave face. His firmly-fixed mouth was suggestive of a resolute will, the brightness of his gray eyes of mental activity, while his broad and massive forehead bespoke intellectual strength. It was impossible to look at him and not be at once impressed by two of his characteristics, calmness and strength.

The owner of Innisfel was a man of decided literary tastes, and his large estate being unencumbered, and left almost entirely to the care of another, he was enabled to pursue at pleasure his favorite studies. He had read much, and in every department of literature. In early life he had found his highest literary enjoyment in the study of the classics; and this early predilection still at times showed itself, when, not pressed by important duties, he would while away an hour with some old Greek or Roman author. But Mr. Marable was not the gentleman of leisure he would perhaps appear to a stranger to be. Up to the time of the opening of this story he had personally superintended the education of his children. He had done this because he was anxious that they should be well grounded in the ancient languages,—a work he was unwilling to trust to another.

But the instruction of his children occupied but a small portion of Mr. Marable's time. When he first came to Innisfel to live,—which was immediately after his marriage,—and for several years thereafter, he had no other objects in life than to care for his family, and to gratify his own tastes and desires. At that time he bestowed more attention upon the management of his estate than he did now; not because he felt more interest in it then, but because he had more leisure. He seemed to his neighbors to be leading rather a selfish life, as he was evidently satisfied with the society of his family and of his books, even avoiding all public gatherings, whether religious or social. At that time, too, conscious of his strength,—of his physical and mental strength,—he was proud, self-reliant, and haughty in his bearing.

But a change, a very great change, has come upon this strong, proud, and self-reliant man. He is still strong, yet he daily confesses his weakness; he is still proud, yet possessing humility; and he is still self-reliant, while constantly acknowl-

edging his dependence. Again, instead of being regarded as unsocial and selfish, he is now the best known and the best loved man in the neighborhood. For miles around Innisfel men will swear by Philip Marable. His poor neighbors, and they are quite numerous, wonder that they ever thought this man haughty,—this man who never passes one of them, however humble he may be, without speaking a friendly word, who visits them when they are sick, who relieves their wants when overtaken by misfortune, who, assisted by his wife, has gathered their children into Sunday-schools, and who has erected, at his own expense, in two different localities, poor, but thickly settled mountain districts, comfortable buildings, to serve both as churches and school-houses. Such were some of the duties—not self-imposed, but Christ-imposed—by attending to which Mr. Marable had come to be not only the most active man in the community, but the most influential and the best loved.

But there was another who was loved even more than was this man by the people of the Innisfel district, and that other was his wife. It was well known to the people of the district, unworldly though they were in most respects, that Mr. Marable had come to be what he was to them through the influence of his wife. Many of them could remember when she came, young and inexperienced, to take her place as mistress of the large white house on the hill. The event stirred little interest in their hearts at the time. As the splendid carriage passed their humble doors, a momentary curiosity made them look up to catch a glimpse of the bride whom their rich neighbor, known to them only by sight, was taking to her new home. But their thoughts followed the carriage no longer than it was in sight, for what was there in common between its inmates and themselves?

A month passed by. A very poor family, living half a mile from Innisfel, had fallen into distress. All of its members who were able to work, except a girl hardly grown, were prostrated by the fever at the same time. Their scanty hoard was soon expended, and then, when they had used the last pittance furnished by neighbors as poor as themselves, they found themselves face to face with the grimmest want,—want of medicine and want of attention,—for the poor girl who had escaped the fever had begun to stagger beneath the load which

had been put upon her. But the cries of the younger children for bread drove her forth to make one more effort. Hardly knowing whither she went she found herself, after a while, in front of the large house on the hill. Perhaps it was pride which had kept her from going there sooner, and which now made her pause, but the cries of the children she had left were still sounding in her ears, and she went on up to the rich man's door. The door was opened by Mrs. Marable herself.

"Please, ma'am, I want some meal," spoke the girl, in a faltering voice.

The blue eyes of Lucy Marable looked wonderingly upon the shrinking form before her, looked pityingly into the pinched face, with its hollow eyes, turned toward her own. She led the half-starved child within, and, after giving her a little wine and something to eat, heard her story. Then filling a basket with what viands she happened to have prepared, and such as she thought suitable for the sick, and bidding a servant bring it after her, she went with the girl back to her home. Never will the family of Silas Dobbs forget that afternoon when the mistress of Innisfel came into their humble home, bringing with her light, and comfort, and hope. Nor will they ever forget her kind words, nor how, not afraid of soiling her fair hands or her rich dress, she went to work, with the servant she had brought, to make them more comfortable by making their abode cleaner and neater. But she gave to them more than health, and left with them more than the remembrance of her good cheer and her kind words: she left with them something of her own bright spirit, something of that light which illumined her own soul,—a light kindled at the torch of the Son of Man.

Thus was she introduced to the poor of her neighborhood, and thus she began her work among them. This work was not long confined to simply extending aid to the needy; but, especially after her husband came to her assistance, it developed into plans for the promotion of their permanent improvement, which plans were founded upon the principle that the best service we can do the poor or ignorant is to teach them how to help themselves.

Nearly twenty years have passed since Lucy Marable entered, like a ray of sunshine, into the darkened home of Silas

Dobbs, but they have brought no threads of silver among her auburn locks. Years so full of good deeds and gentle words as hers have been press lightly upon the brow and stay not the buoyant step. And they have come to her, too, fraught with blessings; they have brought to her the good-will and love of all her neighbors, they have brought to her her children, and, in a different sense, they have brought to her her husband.

On a Saturday morning in June, in the year 1852, Mr. and Mrs. Marable received a message from a poor woman in the neighborhood, asking that they would come to her with all haste. The woman was the wife of a fisherman, known as Andrew Stockley, and they occupied a small house situated on Mr. Marable's estate, in a secluded hollow and near to the river. This man Stockley, with his wife and a little girl, now about four years of age, had come, three years before, to this out-of-the-way abode; since which time he had devoted himself to fishing in the river flowing within a stone's cast of his door. His bushy, sandy-colored hair went generally unkempt, while his low brow and deep-set eyes, with a decidedly vicious aspect in them, gave to him a character sufficiently unprepossessing to deter his neighbors from seeking any intimacy with him; so he had lived, as he evidently wished to, sullenly apart from them.

When Mr. Marable and his wife arrived at the hut of the fisherman they found no one within but the woman. This woman had, like her husband, kept aloof from her neighbors. She was tall and slender, with black eyes, and a complexion the color of saffron. Despite her appearance she had been a hard-working woman; and it was noticed that she always both spoke and moved with a nervous and almost fierce energy. But she was now laid upon her bed; her hollow eyes shining with an unnatural lustre, and the saffron color of her skin changed to an ashen hue.

Mr. and Mrs. Marable advanced at once to the bedside of the sick woman. The former, placing his hand upon her wrist, asked if a doctor had been sent for.

"It is not for myself that I've sent for you," she said, with some difficulty, and with a little impatience in her tone; "this flutterin' in my heart tells me I'm past all help. I knew long ago it would come, and how, and for a week past

I've been lookin' for it. Last night it seemed very near, and when it struck me down an hour ago I knew what it was."

"But you *must* have a doctor," said Mr. Marable, turning away, as he spoke, from the bedside.

"Stop!" she exclaimed, impatiently. "Jeems—Andy, I mean—has gone for one." Mr. Marable turning back at these words, she went on in a calmer tone, "I told him not to go, 'twould do no good, but he would go; he left as he saw you coming."

As she ceased speaking Mr. Marable produced a New Testament, a pocket edition of which he always carried with him, and asked if he should read to her from it.

"No, no," she answered, hurriedly, "it's too late—too late for me to mind such things now: I've lived without 'em, and I must die without 'em. It wern't to help me, body nor soul, that I asked you both to come here this day. Listen, while I have strength to talk. The child Hattie—she is not mine, nor Stockley's. I tell you now, with my last breath, that she is well-born; and it was to tell you this that I sent for you, and to ask—to beg—that you will take her when I am gone—will take her to your own home."

Her tones were now pleading, and her hollow eyes turned from one to the other of her auditors, whose astonishment at this unlooked-for request kept them from immediately replying. Mistaking, perhaps, the cause of their silence, the woman continued, but in a weaker voice,—

"Oh, sir, will you take the child? Lady, will you take her to your own home, and to be, as is her right, the equal of your children? I confess to you—with my dyin' breath I declare it!—that I stole the child; that I, with these hands, and no one helping me, three years ago, stole her from her parents; and that I did it because I hated 'em. What more do ye ask—what more need I tell? Yet, I will say, strange as it may seem, that I learned to love the child—yes, *his* child—hardened as I was. Oh, lady, you'll take Hattie—"

She sank back exhausted, unable to say more. Mrs. Marable, thinking the woman dying, bent over her, and, with one of her hands lightly laid upon the already clammy brow, said, "Fear not for Hattie; we will take her."

A light came into the face of the dying woman as she

heard these words. She spoke again, still more feebly and brokenly :

"Oh! thank you. I knew you'd take her. You tried to be kind to me more than once, but I wouldn't let you. I saw you stop once and kiss the child. Everybody says you are kind, good. Oh, if I could live a little longer—if I hadn't shut my heart against you—if I could still be nigh you, perhaps——"

Her voice died away, her eyelids closed, and she rested for a few moments in an apparently unconscious state. When she again opened her eyes, Mr. Marable said,—

"Will you not tell us who are the child's parents, that we may restore her to them?"

The woman started. "I dare not," she gasped out; "for her sake I dare not!" Then muttering something unintelligibly, she fell back evidently dying. Mr. Marable knelt at the bedside, and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, asked God for mercy to the dying woman. Mrs. Marable, bending over her, and with one hand still resting upon her brow, and calling her by her Christian name, which she had learned from Hattie, said, "Keep not the child from her parents, Jennette; forgive them, as you hope to be forgiven, and give them back their child."

Again the glazing eyes opened, and the face was contorted for a moment as if with an effort to speak. It was too late; only a gurgling sound issued from the parched lips, and with the sound passed the spirit of the misguided woman.

CHAPTER II.

HATTIE.

ON that same Saturday morning, about a quarter of a mile from Stockley's house, and on the bank of the river, were two boys preparing some large hooks which they intended setting in the stream, while close by stood a little girl caressing the head of a large, shaggy dog, the property of the boys.

"Did you ever notice, Julian," said Paul, "how fond Cato is of Hattie? He will take any treatment she is pleased to give him, and it has been so from the first."

"Yes, I've noticed it,—the little gypsy has bewitched him."

"You know he is always sullen with strangers, and cross to children, though he will not hurt them. But I have often seen him put himself in Hattie's way, plainly showing that he liked her caresses."

Having made ready their hooks, they unlocked their bateau.

"Julie, let me go?" cried Hattie, when she saw them about ready to push off from the bank.

"Well, I suppose you must, as you might get snake-bitten or fall into the river if we left you." Then he added, in a lower tone, and with some petulance, "But you ought not to be here in the way so often."

"Don't scold her, Julian; it's dull for the child at home, no doubt; and besides, I love to have her about. She can sit on the middle seat, and be out of harm's way, and ours, too."

"It seems to me," replied Julian, "that Cato is not the only individual that the little plebeian has bewitched."

"Don't call her *plebeian*, Julian, for I tell you there is nothing low or common about the child."

Julian looked at his brother as if he thought he had spoken with more earnestness than the case demanded. But he answered, cheerily, "All right, chevalier, I am ready to regard her as a princess in disguise, and address her henceforth as

'your highness,' if the title does not offend your republican instincts. But really, Paul, I agree with you,—there is nothing plebeian about her, except her surroundings."

By this time the boat was floating down the stream toward an overhanging willow, to a limb of which the boys designed suspending one of the hooks they had just prepared. Julian was on the stern seat, Hattie on the middle one, with Cato lying at her feet, while Paul sat on the prow with the hook and line in his hand, ready to attach it when they reached the limb.

Julian and Paul Marable were both well-grown, well-formed, active lads, and, though rather slender, were muscular enough. Julian was like his father, or rather like his father was in his youth. His hair was dark, his features quite regular, and his complexion, though a little tawny, was clear. His face, when in repose, wore a serious and thoughtful expression. At other times—and these times came often for one so young—there rested upon it an evil shadow, betraying a spirit of inquietude or discontent. There were only three, it seemed, whom he ever exerted himself to please: these were his mother, brother, and sister. It is true he respected and loved his father, but there was a difference, perhaps it was a similarity in their mental constitutions, which served as a bar to that free communion of spirit between them which each one had with the other members of the family. Paul was more like his mother, both in person and disposition. His features were more regular than were his brother's, while his soft, hazel eyes, and high, broad forehead, told of an amiability of mind rarely met with. His hair was a golden hue; and combed back, as it always was, behind his ears, it fell in shining and graceful waves about his neck. He was frank and cheerful in his disposition, and though tender as a girl of the feelings of others, he was manly both in his bearing and in his sports.

But, interesting as the lads were, the eye of a stranger would have rested with not less interest upon the middle figure of the group, the reputed child of a rough fisherman. Clad as she was in a neatly-fitting calico dress, with ruffled pantalets clasping her bare, brown legs just below the knees, with her bonnet falling back from her neck to let the wind disport with her soft, light-brown hair, falling in wavy ringlets about her head, it was impossible to connect her with such a boor as Stockley.

"I say, Hattie, you must keep on the seat, or you will fall out."

Julian spoke this a little roughly, for she had kept him uneasy for some time, now standing up, and now leaning over the side of the boat to dip her hands in the water.

Hattie resumed her seat, but with a cloud on her face. Presently she said,—

"Julie, you don't love me like Jennette does, and like Paul. You scold, and they never do."

"Why should I love you, little one?" asked Julian.

"Because—then I would love you."

"You would? And what do I care for your love, Miss Harriet?"

She turned away with an injured look, and saying, more to herself than to him, "But Paul loves me."

"Yes, he does, Hattie, and always will. And you may tell Julie that he can't afford to throw away hearts,—he will want them some day."

"Not hers, I reckon," muttered the older brother to himself. But a look of contrition which rested upon his face the next moment spoke better things of his heart than the words his lips had uttered. He remained silent a few moments, then suddenly laying aside his oar, he went to the child, and, lifting her up in his arms, said,—

"And Julie will love you, too, Hattie. He doesn't know any little girl, except Bertha, that he can love as well as he does you. Now kiss me."

The cloud was dispelled from the child's face in an instant, and a gleam of joy and triumph brightened its wellnigh perfect beauty, as she held up her pretty mouth to be kissed.

"Hurrah!" cried Paul, "that was interesting; as good as we sometimes have in a novel. I'll have to tell it to mother and Bertha."

By this time they had reached the limb to which they designed suspending one of the hooks they had prepared. While the boys were engaged in doing this, a bateau glided silently out from under the foliage which concealed the adjacent bank from their view. Its single occupant was Andrew Stockley. As the boat suddenly emerged from the bushes, Hattie was startled into a little cry of surprise, which made the boys look around. The latter had often met Stockley in their rambles

near the river, but owing to his evident churlishness of disposition they had had little intercourse with him. They had heard him speak but a few times, and then always in a sullen tone, and with as few words as possible. They were, therefore, a little surprised to hear him say, in a low tone, as his boat came alongside their own,—

“You warn’t skeared of Andy, was you, chile?”

This man had been trying for years to quench all there was of good in his own nature, and at the same time harden his heart against whatever of good there may have been in the natures of those around him. He hated all things except the hate in his own hard heart—he cherished that, and fed upon it. Perhaps he did not hate his wife; he had loved her once, and he could never get entirely away from that old first love. He had come long since, however, to treat her with indifference, and yet, at times,—and the intervals were sometimes very long,—he would do or say something, unintentionally it may be, which revealed to the poor, tired woman that there lingered yet in Andy’s heart something—a meagre relic it must have been, yet it was something, thank God!—of his old-time love for her. To Hattie he had uniformly been indifferent—never ill-treating her, yet taking little notice of her, either by word or look. When, therefore, he came saying, “You warn’t skeared of Andy, was you, chile?” his tones had in them something which sounded, very little it may be, like a plea for sympathy. The child noticed it, perhaps, for she put her hand on one of his brawny hands, as it rested on the edge of the boat. Before the boys could resume their work, Stockley, addressing himself to them, thus spoke:

“Ye’ve been thinkin’, no doubt, young masters, that the child here is too fair and delicate-like to be the child of a rough man like me, and ye’re right, she’s not mine—no kin to my woman nor myself. It matters not now whose she is.” Then taking from his pocket a gold ring, old-fashioned in its appearance, and having in the midst of its unique carving a cluster of brilliants, he held it up before the eyes of the boys, and thus continued: “See this ring, young masters, both on ye; it was a long time Jennette’s; I give it to her. I found it in England, just afore I come to this country. Jennette put it in my hand this day, and told me to give it to Hattie; I promised to do it, and ye are both witnesses that it is done.”

As he finished speaking he put the silk cord to which the ring was attached about the neck of the child, letting the ring fall upon the bosom of her dress. This done, he sat for a moment gazing at Hattie as if he would like to say something more to her. He took up his paddle, however, without doing so, and began to pull away slowly. But he got off only a few feet when he came back, and, holding out his hand to the child, said,—

“Hattie, ye’ll not live with Andy any mo’. Good-by.”

“Where are you going, Andy?” asked the child, looking perplexed, yet holding out her hand to him. He made no reply, only held the little hand in his for a second, then silently went away.

The boys, as well as Hattie, were perplexed by the strange conduct of the fisherman. After setting out a few more hooks, they returned to their landing. Here they were met by Mr. Marable, who, lifting the little girl from the boat, led her up the bank to where Mrs. Marable was waiting for her. The latter stooped to kiss the child, then taking her by the hand led her toward her own home. Mr. Marable returned to his sons. He briefly told them what had just transpired at the hut of the fisherman, and ended by saying,—

“I shall try to find Hattie’s parents; in the mean time she will be an inmate of my family. It is hardly necessary, I think, to urge my sons to show her at all times kindness and affection.”

Not “hardly necessary,” but entirely superfluous would he have deemed his suggestion to his sons had he been with them and Hattie on their fishing excursion that morning.

The boys returned home, while Mr. Marable went to make arrangements for the interment of the dead woman.

CHAPTER III.

THE HERMIT OF BLUESTONE SPRING.

A FEW days after the events recorded in the last chapter, Mr. Marable called at the house of the fisherman for the purpose of making inquiries in regard to the parentage of Hattie; but he found the house deserted, nor could any one tell him when Stockley had left it, or whither he had gone. If this man could not be found there was nothing left for him to do but to have published in the principal newspapers of the State the facts given by Jennette on her death-bed. He shrank from this course on account of its publicity; and, besides, he thought it to be attended with serious difficulties. The facts in the case were very meagre, and there were now no witnesses to furnish additional and corroborative details. There was nothing of Hattie's in his possession which could establish her identity. It was not even known in what section of the country the kidnapping had been done. Mr. Marable, perhaps unconsciously, magnified these difficulties. The fact was, the last intelligible words of Jennette, "I dare not—for the child's sake—I dare not," had had the effect to make him wish that he could let the matter rest as it was. But believing it to be his duty to do all he could to discover the child's parents, he was determined to discharge it. Just as he had concluded that he would immediately advertise the facts through the papers, he saw the object of his recent search standing by the roadside, just in front of him. Stockley was the first to speak.

"You went to look for me—here I am."

"Yes, Andrew, I have been to look for you," began Mr. Marable, in a conciliatory tone, "and I'll come at once to the object I had in seeking you. You doubtless know who are the parents of the child your wife left to Mrs. Marable's care. I don't ask you to give any information that will hurt yourself or any one else, but only such as will enable me to find the parents of the child."

"I can tell ye nothin',—my woman had the chile when I first knowed her."

"In what State was your wife then?"

"North Car'lina."

"In what place in North Carolina?"

"Raleigh."

"Did the child's parents live in Raleigh?"

"No."

"Where did they live?"

"I don't know."

"I hope, Andrew, you will give me all the information you possess about this child; if you do, upon my word no trouble shall come to you from it. Will you tell me the name of the child's father?"

"Don't know it."

"Have you in your possession anything that can identify her, any part of the dress she wore when carried off, or any trinket she may have had about her?"

"I have none o' these."

"Your answers, Mr. Stockley, have not been satisfactory. I feel it to be my duty to take you before a magistrate, that your answers to these questions, and others I may ask you, may be given under oath, and recorded."

"I'll not go."

With this laconic answer he stepped back into the bushes, but quickly reappeared, mounted on a small, shaggy horse.

"Mr. Marable," he said, "you and Mrs. Marable has been good to my po' woman. Andy Stockley will not soon forgit it, though he may never be whar he ken pay it back."

He then rode away through the woods towards the mountains.

The dignity of Mr. Philip Marable shrank just a little as he looked upon the retreating figure, and thought of the remark he had just made in regard to taking him before a magistrate.

"It is useless to attempt to follow him," he said to himself. "He is a cool, self-possessed fellow when not drinking; and has some good in him too. After all, he may have answered me truthfully."

Mr. Marable sent communications to several leading newspapers, both in North Carolina and in his own State, detailing the facts he possessed of Hattie's abduction. These communications were copied into other papers; yet, to his surprise, no

letters of inquiry were elicited by them. Having done this much, he considered his duty in the matter discharged. And wishing now, for good and obvious reasons, that the circumstances of Hattie's introduction into his family might be forgotten as much as possible, he cautioned both his children and servants against ever speaking of them, either to her or to any one outside of the family.

Bertha, who had fallen in love with Hattie the first time she saw her, with unfeigned delight welcomed her to her own home. With dark hair, a fair and fresh complexion, dark-blue eyes, and more than all, with a joyous and buoyant spirit, Bertha Marable was as winsome a child as one ever saw or would ever wish to see. Loving her parents dearly, she showed her love by her ready and cheerful compliance with their wishes. To her brothers she was indeed devoted; how could she be otherwise when she knew they would make any sacrifice to please her? She and Hattie often accompanied Julian and Paul in their rambles through the woods and fields, and sometimes, on calm days, would venture with them upon the river in their boat.

Two years passed away; two years full of quiet happiness to the household at Innisfel. On a still August day, Julian and Paul were pulling their boat, a small skiff, slowly up the river. They had with them their two sisters,—Hattie had long since come to be regarded as one of them,—and were going to a well-known and favorite spot, where, in a grove of water-oaks, a clear, bold stream bubbled up through the bottom of a basin-shaped stone. The bright blue color of this stone suggested a name for the fountain, it being known as Bluestone Spring. Back of the spring rose an almost perpendicular cliff, with a rugged face. The space between this cliff and the river's edge was clear of undergrowth, and carpeted with moss; and scattered here and there beneath the trees were large limestone bowlders.

The boat moved slowly and quietly up the stream until, passing a clump of bushes which concealed the place of the fountain from view, its prow was almost touching the little stone pier which served as a landing for any one visiting the spring. The occupants of the boat were not a little surprised to see the form of a man reclining on one of the broad stones already mentioned,—surprised because they had never before

met any one there. The man had evidently been asleep, but when the boat touched the rock he opened his eyes with a start. He closed them again, however, almost instantly, and appeared to be still asleep when the Marable children passed by him on their way to the spring. There was a tin-cup sitting on a ledge of rock above the basin-shaped stone, and below it, fastened among the rocks through which the streamlet flowed, was a black bottle, half full of some liquid. The children had no sooner satisfied their thirst than they heard behind them a deep voice which made them start. It came from the stranger, who, unperceived, had come up, and, without hat or coat, was standing close behind them. He was a man somewhat corpulent, with iron-gray hair and beard, the former shingled close, and the latter about two weeks old. His eyes, light blue in color, were bloodshot, and protruded slightly from his head. But his most prominent feature was his nose, the end of it being very thick and red. He wore cassimere pantaloons, with a broad stripe, and somewhat soiled; his coat, of the same material with his trowsers, was hanging from the limb of a tree near by.

"The Marable children are welcome," he said; "the Hermit of Bluestone Spring bids you welcome."

Saying which, he sat down on a rock close at hand.

"Young gentlemen," he continued, "will you please draw near and occupy with me this adamantean bench? I would have some converse with you. The little girls, like Naiads of the fountain, can disport themselves in the grove in pursuance of their own bright fancies."

The boys, both surprised and amused by the unusual demeanor of the stranger, and by his theatrical manner of delivering himself, seated themselves as desired.

"It is seldom that I have an opportunity, my lads," continued the odd-looking hermit, "of conversing with my own species. The rocks, trees, and waters have been, for many years, the only companions of my solitude. Having tried the world, having tasted, so to speak, of all its pleasures; yea, like the wise man of old, having diligently sought to know and to try all things under the sun, to see, in truth, if there was any good in any of them, I have been, like him, constrained to pronounce them all to be—for heaven's sake, don't upset my bottle, little Naiads!—vanity, and only vanity."

Pausing a moment to take breath and to wipe the perspiration from his brow with a soiled silk handkerchief, he thus went on :

"Yes, ah ! yes, the world, with all its allurements, with all its honors, I have renounced, voluntarily renounced, that here, in this solitude, forgetting life's cares, temptations, and conflicts, I might, without distraction, abandon myself to those pious meditations so consonant to my natural disposition. Yea, here I indulge in devout musings, and do penance for the sins of my youth. And the penance, my young friends, which afflicts me the most grievously is the imbibing, at stated periods during the day, a certain portion of the contents of yonder junk bottle. Ah ! Julian, it's a bitter dose, yet grace is given me to endure it. But the dreaded moment draws on apace, yea, it is even now at hand, when this miserable drug—known in science as *spiritus Kentuckiensis frumenti*—must come in contact with my rebellious throat."

He stopped talking long enough to get his bottle and cup. While he was doing this the brothers exchanged glances which showed that they understood and enjoyed this serio-comic impersonation of the devout recluse. Having poured the cup nearly full, the man held it awhile in his slightly tremulous hand.

"I hold in my hand," he continued, "not a golden cup brimming with divine nectar. Ah, no ! Nor is it permitted to me, as it was to the prince of poets, to quaff *sub umbra*—in this cool retreat—*innocentis pocula Lesbii*—goblets of inoffensive Lesbian. But pardon me for translating, for you are both, doubtless, familiar with Horace. Young gentlemen, may you live and flourish !"

Saying which, he drank off the contents of the cup, making, as he did so, an ugly grimace, and giving forth a grunt which, even to the inexperienced ears of the boys, expressed more of satisfaction than of affliction. After replacing his cup and bottle, he resumed his seat, and for a minute sat silently watching the little girls at play beside the rivulet not far off.

"I fear, Hermit," said Paul, "that this penance with which you afflict your wasted body and grieve your pious soul will prove too much for you. Can you not be persuaded to substitute for it a milder one?"

"Ah ! young man, I perceive in thy speech the accents of

irony. Irony from one of thy years is quite incisive; nay, more, it is touching; for it betrays a spirit of scepticism which I did not look for in you. It would not have surprised me coming from your brother here."

"You are mistaken in me, I think," said Julian, "for, knowing something of the virtues of this decoction, which is even called in some countries *aqua vitæ*, I was about to join issue with my brother, and, in consideration of your collapsed condition, urge you to a continuance of its use. I know that it is exceedingly nauseating to the taste; but then will it not clear the mind, calm the passions, and in every way be an aid to devout meditation? Will it not, too, especially if imbibed habitually and freely, steady the step and hand, and give clearness to the eyes and complexion? In proof of this last virtue I have only to point to your nose——"

"Stop, young man!" interrupted the pseudo-hermit, "cease thy irreverent speech. I clearly perceive that thou art yet in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. *O tempora, O mores!* when the sons of Philip Marable can thus mock at and bait a good and peaceful old man. But let us change the subject. Are both the little girls yonder your sisters?"

"Yes," answered Julian, a little startled by the abruptness of the question. "Why do you ask?"

"Because the younger one bears no resemblance to either of you, or to her sister. How old is she?"

"She is in her seventh year," answered Julian.

At that moment a small skiff turned the clump of bushes already mentioned; its prow struck, the next instant, the soft bank close to the stone pier, and its only occupant, a youth sixteen or seventeen years of age, leaped ashore. After securing his boat, he advanced straight to the party at the spring. Julian and Paul at once recognized in him a youth whom they had frequently seen in Rome, but between whom and themselves there had been, it so happened, no intercourse. They knew that his name was Ned Winter; and they had heard that he was already a wild, graceless fellow. His face, though not handsome, was bright with intelligence, and this, together with its self-confident and *insouciant* expression, made it striking. His eyes, light gray in color, were crescent shaped, and for this reason, perhaps, they never seemed to be looking at you, but just above you. The extremity of his rather long

nose had a somewhat bulbous appearance, and his light hair, which he wore half shingled, curled naturally over his head. As he came up to the spring he shook hands with Julian and Paul.

"Boys, I am glad to meet you," he said, in an easy manner. "Of course we know each other, and so will waive the formality of an introduction." Then noticing the little girls, who had turned from their play at his approach, he gracefully raised his cap, a black silk one, saying as he did so, "Young ladies, your most obedient." He next turned toward the man reclining with his head against the stone, and now having his eyes closed.

"Ha! you here?" he exclaimed. "I did not expect to see your amiable countenance in this solitude."

"Welcome, Ned!" spoke the man languidly, and without opening his eyes. "The Hermit of Bluestone Spring——"

"That's your *rôle* to-day, is it? *To-day* the pious monk of Bluestone Spring, *to-morrow*——"

"Away, thou young reprobate; hast thou no respect for gray hairs? Begone, and disturb not with thy noisy and profane babbling my peaceful cogitations."

"Respect for gray hairs," repeated Ned; "yea, and for virtue, too, which I may see personified in the recumbent form before me. But come, boys, let us leave him to take his *siesta* in quiet. This is my first visit to Bluestone Spring, so, after testing the coolness of its waters, if agreeable to you, we will take a walk around the grove."

Julian and Paul were pleased at finding Ned not only full of life and humor, but well informed, and as familiar as themselves with the old classics. He could quote fluently from all the ancient authors he had read, whether Greek or Roman. His new friends were somewhat surprised at this, owing to the unfavorable reports they had received of him. They soon learned that he was a member of the school in Rome which they expected to enter in a few days. Ned, on his part, expressed much pleasure at the prospect of their being school-fellows. He, of course, gave quite a full account of the school; which account included humorous sketches of its principal, Mr. Briggs, and his assistant, Mr. Stubbins.

At length the slanting rays of the sun, lengthening the shadows of the trees far out upon the water, warned them

that it was time to depart. While the Marable brothers were getting ready their boat and helping their sisters into it, the hermit and Ned held a short conference at the spring.

"I will want your boat to-night, Ned."

"When do you return to Rome?"

"To-morrow."

"You can have the boat. Where are you going?"

"Up the river, three or four miles. How will you get back to town if I take the boat?"

"A small steamer plying between Rome and Resaca will be passing down presently; you can put me on board. I will go with the Marables to their landing and return in time."

They then went to rejoin the others, who were ready to start. When Ned had taken his seat, the hermit, standing on the bank, delivered himself as follows:

"My young friends, I am indebted to you for a pleasant afternoon. May I not hope to again, and often, hear the merry sound of your voices dispelling the gloom of my solitude? Go in peace, and may propitious zephyrs waft you to your respective havens!"

To which Ned, standing up, thus responded:

"Thou gentle anchorite, we should ask of thee pardon for this intrusion upon thy retirement, which thy generous soul would have us to repeat. Oh, mayst thou live the guardian of this Castalian fount, and by thy chaste presence, and love of classic lore, preserve it to the sacred Nine. And may that elixir, that extract of bitter *yarbs*, *Kentuckiensis*, etc., serve to reconcile you to the loss of that world you have so heroically renounced. In conclusion, let me hope that no unpleasant memories will intrude upon thy quiet reveries, and that no disturbing dreams will visit thy innocent slumbers."

The boats were now loosed from their moorings, and their sails hoisted. As they glided down the river, Ned Winter, standing in the stern, sang in a loud, clear voice, and with some pathos, Byron's "Lines to Tom Moore." By the time he concluded it the Marable landing was reached. After interchanging a friendly good-by, Ned kept his boat turned towards Rome, only to deceive his new friends; as soon as these were out of sight he turned the prow again up the stream.

CHAPTER IV.

MORAL OBLIQUITY.

WHEN the youthful party had left him alone, George Brenham, the self-styled hermit, paced back and forth the path which led from the water's edge to the fountain. His step was nervous, his gestures at times violent, and his half-articulate mutterings impatient or fierce, all of which suggested that his musings were in no degree of a pious or peaceful character. He stopped, at length, on the little stone pier, and, looking down into the water, thus muttered to himself:

"Now, if this were Lethe's stream, and by plunging in I could wash away all memory of the past! And yet it might prove to *me* a Lethean stream; who knows the soul will live? The waters look still and deep; a quick resolve, a plunge, and—damnation! away with the mad thought! Ha, ha, 'to be, or not to be,' is not the question with me yet; no, nor will it ever be. What do I care for past memories? Let the past remain with the past; I am concerned now only with the present and the future. I must live, and if I choose to live by my wits, let the witless keep out of my way. What care I what men may *think*, if I have enough to eat and to drink—yes, enough to *drink*? Let them call me a night-hawk, or land-shark, and, thrusting me out from society's pale, force me to skulk through the country under a false name, yet I will still enjoy life as well as the most of them. They call my life selfish and base, because, forsooth, tired of a complaining woman with a whining babe, I rid them of my presence; and again they brand it with dishonor because I put another man's name to a bit of paper. But why will I recall these old matters? Why vex my brain so often with these things that are past? Is it because they are not past and are never to pass? Ha! but I hold in my hand a nepenthe, and I will drink it—drink it until these memories and hell-suggested fancies leave me. Yet why do I resort to that

which has been my curse? Why cling to the fiend that, day by day, thrusts me deeper in perdition? But what a fool I am! Have I not asked the silly question a thousand times, and always answered it, as I do now, by drinking a deeper draught of the maddening fluid?"

He put the bottle to his lips and took a long draught.

"*Quantum sufficit*, Brenham," he presently said, in a calmer tone. "Don't make a beast of yourself. Remember the appointment you have made with a certain hard-headed, surly fellow, and for to-night. That meeting must be kept. But here comes Ned."

"Well, Hermit," said the young man, as he leaped ashore and led the way to the spring, "I'm devilish dry; let's go and try some of your Robinson County."

"Ned, I was ten years older than you now are before I could talk so flippantly of being 'dry.'" Brenham said this in a tone slightly remonstrating.

"Which is only another proof that the world is moving on," answered the youth, carelessly.

"Yes, moving on, but in a wrong direction, it seems"

"What! you turning moralist? We will hear next, I suppose, of good Parson Brenham. Well, here's success to your evangelistic career!"

"Ned Winter, you have taken the devil's own road, as surely as your father took it before you."

"What do you know of my father? I want to hear nothing of him," answered Ned, with some sharpness. Then added, in his usual tone, "Come, Brenham, try a cup of this elixir, and stop your preaching, or, if you must continue it, preach to yourself—I don't want to hear it."

Brenham turned and walked half-way to the river, then returning as suddenly as he went off, he asked, abruptly,—

"Has Horace Winter returned yet to Augusta?"

"Yes, he went yesterday."

"He left your aunt in Rome?"

"No, she went with him."

"Did he go to see your mother during his visit?"

"He went once."

"Your aunt still grieves for her lost child?"

"She grieves, I suppose, but never mentions her. She has a way of starting up, at times, and listening as if she heard

some one coming, then sinking back with a sigh when the illusion has passed."

"How does she meet you now?"

"With more favor. I've played the agreeable to the best of my ability, and, on several occasions during her recent visit, have made myself useful to her. But I'll tell you a circumstance that happened a few days ago. While standing on the street, I saw my aunt passing down on the opposite side. She was passing a store out of which the Marable children were coming,—I knew them by sight very well. As her eyes fell upon the youngest she stopped, and looked at her intently; then, as the child came close to her, she stooped down and arrested her by passing one arm about her. Coming up just then I heard her ask the child her name. As my aunt heard the name, she started up quickly, while her pale cheeks became yet more pallid. But recovering herself almost instantly she again bent down, saying, 'Kiss me, Hattie.' The child did so, when, being released, she followed her brothers and sister. Said I, 'Aunt, can I do anything for you?' But her eyes, and thoughts, too, doubtless, were still following the child, so she did not hear me. I heard her repeat the name *Marable* several times to herself, and then, as the children passed out of sight, she turned away, murmuring, 'How like, how like!' Again offering my services, she said, 'I came out to do a little shopping, Ned, but I'll take your arm and go home.'"

"Your telling me this, Ned," replied Brenham, "makes it necessary to give you a piece of information I had intended to keep to myself awhile longer; but, by knowing it, you will be, I now believe, the better prepared to conceal and further our plans. It is well, my boy, that you did not think it necessary to inform Mrs. Winter that the child Hattie is *not* a Marable; had you done so your little game would certainly have been played out. I have reason to believe that Harriet Marable is your aunt's lost child."

"The devil!" exclaimed Ned. "I thought her child was drowned. Why do you believe this?"

"I cannot tell all now, but I know the man who stole her; have tracked him so far, and expect to come up with him tonight. My object now is to get possession of whatever he has which can identify her. In the mean time, you must use every opportunity you have of working yourself into the good

graces of Horace Winter and his wife. Be cautious, however ; if he should suspect your object, you might as well throw up your hand."

"I think I have played my hand pretty well, so far," said Ned. "Last Sunday afternoon I called on my aunt, carrying with me a pocket Testament and a hymn-book—I believe I told you that of late she affects piety. Well, we read the Bible and sang psalms together. I had prepared for the occasion, not only in learning to sing the hymns, but by reading several chapters of Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, from which I freely quoted, much to my aunt's comfort, no doubt. When I left, she said, as she followed me to the door, 'I have enjoyed the afternoon very much, Ned. You must come again.'—But I hear the boat coming; let us get ready to meet it."

A few minutes later this amiable pair separated, after Ned had taken what he called a "stirrup-cup."

CHAPTER V.

TWO ALIASES.

THAT night, in a rude hut, situated between two wooded and precipitous hills some six or seven miles above Mr. Marable's landing, and close to the river, could be seen, by the glare of burning knots on the hearth, two men who have already been introduced to the readers of this story. A common pine table, on which were a couple of cheap glasses and a bottle, stood between them. Besides the table, and the two chairs occupied by the men, one of which was without a back, there was little else in the room which might be designated as furniture. In one corner was a rude couch made of puncheons; close to it was an unpainted chest, with its lid secured by a padlock, and in another corner sat an open box which served the fisherman as both storeroom and cupboard.

After the interview between Mr. Marable and Stockley, mentioned in a former chapter, the latter had gone away into another State, where he had remained nearly two years; he had, therefore, very recently come to his present abode. This being in a wild district, some distance above Innisfel, and on the opposite side of the river, and, moreover, as he would never go to Rome except after nightfall, he had little fear of being molested. The arrival of a stranger, therefore, that night, at his out-of-the-way abode, who was evidently seeking him with an object, both perplexed and troubled him. Brenham had met him a few nights before in Rome, at which time, in his half-jocular way, he made the appointment which he was now keeping. Stockley, though he was drunk at the time, and only in part comprehended Brenham's words, had yet been troubled by them. As this man, however, was a stranger to him, he had hoped that they were spoken in jest.

When Brenham, therefore, appeared at his door, he refused to admit him, telling him bluntly that he had no room for strangers. But when the other, revealing a couple of black

bottles and a pound sack of smoking-tobacco, insisted on coming in, if only long enough to drink a bottle of good old Bourbon with him and to take a smoke by his comfortable light, he yielded, yet still with seeming reluctance.

Brenham was in no degree abashed by his gruff reception. For a half-hour after they had taken their seats at the table he talked on almost uninterruptedly, and in his spouting style, seeming not to care that his companion listened stolidly, or answered gruffly in monosyllables.

"Stockley," he said at length, after a short pause, "I must say that I don't admire the place of your habitation. As I came up to it to-night I thought I had never seen so dismal a place—a place so fit to be haunted by goblins and mountain spirits. Don't you hear them, man, dancing in front of your door at midnight, sometimes? But you wouldn't trouble yourself to look at them, if you did. It strikes me, friend Stockley, looking upon the dreariness of your retreat, that you have some inclination to avoid your species. Come, wake up—shake off thy misanthropic mood, and be sociable for once in your life. We'll take another drink, and then have a song or two. You don't sing? Well, I do,—I once could sing with the best of 'em. But here goes." With a tolerable voice he sang through a couple of stanzas of an old bacchanalian song, beginning, "Come, gather round the bowl, boys." As he concluded them, he reached for the bottle, saying, "I must wet my whistle after that: singing is dry work."

After pouring out a small drink, he passed the bottle to Stockley.

"Don't be afraid of it," said Brenham, noticing that the other poured out only about half as much as was in his own glass. "It is good, mellow whiskey, and there's plenty of it."

Stockley made no reply, but quietly drank off what he had poured out.

"You have not told me yet what you think of my Orphean strains, friend Andrew," continued Brenham, holding his glass in his hand and sipping at its contents.

"Good," was the brief answer.

"Which—the strains or the whiskey?"

"The whiskey."

"I thought as much. I might as well have sung to the trees outside," said Brenham, finishing his glass. "Do you

know, man, what the Bard of Avon says of him who has not music in his soul? No, I suppose not. In fact, your acquaintance with the illustrious bard is doubtless very slight. But we will dismiss him and speak of another,—one with whom you are better acquainted. Stockley, what has become of James Ansley?"

The fisherman started at the name, and, turning round, his small eyes peered from under his grisly eyebrows straight at the other for the first time. "The devil!" he exclaimed. "What do *I* know of Jeems Ansley?—but who are *you*?"

"Ha! ha!" chuckled the imperturbable Brenham, "that question caught you napping, did it, Jeems? But I must object somewhat to your answer. In the first place, the devil has nothing to do with my question, at least that I am aware of; in the second place, I asked for James, not Jeems, but since a man is supposed to know his own name best, I stand corrected; and, in the third place, your question as to who *I* am is clearly irrelevant; yet I can very well afford to tell you. My name is George Brenham."

"I don't know you."

"That is, you haven't known me in the past. That is immaterial; we'll soon understand each other, I've no doubt. I've come here on business, but business which means no harm to you."

"Yes," was the brief reply of the fisherman, who seemed now to have fallen back into his former stolidity. Brenham, noticing it, proposed that they take another drink, which they did, Stockley helping himself more liberally than he had yet done.

"It may be necessary," continued Brenham, as he filled his pipe, "to recall some ugly reminiscences. I must go back some years; let me see,—the first time I beheld that placid countenance of yours, Ansley——"

"Stockley," interrupted the other.

"Oh, yes, I understand, unpleasant memories. Well, to proceed, the first time I looked upon your classic brow was in Augusta, Georgia. Shall I call to mind the adverse circumstances which then fettered your innocent footsteps?"

"Go on."

"I see you can stand it; truly, innocence is strength, especially when supported by a pure article of old Bourbon."

(It seemed impossible for this man to give up his raillery, though he continued it at the risk of defeating his object.) "But to proceed: you were arraigned on the charge of burglary,—of having entered the store of Horace Winter, and feloniously abstracting therefrom both money and goods. This was about eight years ago. I remember the verdict was 'guilty.' Am I correct?"

"And what then?" asked the fisherman, gruffly.

"A very proper question, Jeems; you would know the drift of my remarks? Well, you shall see it presently; I must first state the circumstances under which I saw you the second time. It was about two years after the trial, and just after sunset of the day on which the infant child of Horace Winter disappeared. I saw you close into the bank of the river, in a bateau. Soon after, I saw a tall woman going toward you, having a shawl thrown around her head, and carrying in her arms what I believed to be a child; it was closely wrapped up. You left the bateau, and, followed by the woman with the child, went up the river, along an obscure path that led close by the water's edge. An hour afterwards it was known throughout the city that Horace Winter's only child, an infant of eleven months, was missing. Search was made everywhere; throughout the night men were traversing the streets and alleys of the city, exploring its untenanted places, going down along the canals and down among the wharves on the river, looking into every nook and corner, to find the rich man's lost child. A party of men rode after a family of gypsies that had passed through the city that afternoon, going towards Savannah. Of course the little heiress was not found with those innocent rovers. After daybreak the next morning a little shoe was found on the bank of the river, which was identified as belonging to the missing child. The search was everywhere else discontinued, and the river was dragged, but its depths revealed not the secret of the child's disappearance. I alone knew the secret; one word from me and the kid would have been restored to its parents, and James Ansley have been returned to the penitentiary."

Stockley sat smoking slowly and deliberately, seemingly unimpressed by the narration of the other. At its conclusion he laid aside his pipe, and, filling his glass half full of the fiery liquid, he drank it off at a single gulp.

"And why didn't ye speak it?" he asked, for the second time peering at his companion with his small, green eyes.

"Ah, Jimmie, your question is to the point. I can easily and briefly answer it. It so happens that I have cause, perhaps as much as you have, to hate the man Horace Winter; and it further happens that I'm as little inclined as you are to do my enemy a service. I tell you, man, I would have far sooner covered up your tracks than have revealed them."

"And now—what d'ye want of me?"

"Again to the point, thou worthy angler. I perceive that we will speedily understand each other. At present I want to know of you, Ansley, only two things, and one of these I'm quite satisfied about before asking it. First, is not the child, Hattie, now in Philip Marable's family, Horace Winter's lost child? and, secondly, have you preserved any articles of hers by which she can be identified?"

The fisherman smoked away calmly for a half-minute before replying. Then removing the pipe from his mouth, and looking at the other,—a fact which gave his words more emphasis,—he said, slowly,—

"Ye've mistook the man."

George Brenham for one moment seemed disconcerted, so confident had he been all along of the truth of his suspicions, and that this interview would result in their confirmation. For the first time the probable failure of his visit confronted him. But he would make another effort.

"Mistaken? I can't be mistaken. Do I not see before me the man who, as James Ansley, I saw tried for burglary in Augusta eight years ago,—the same man who, six years ago, I saw skulking along the Savannah River, followed by a tall, dark-eyed woman carrying in her arms an infant, and the same man who, known as Andrew Stockley, was living upon Philip Marable's estate a little more than two years ago, and whose wife on her death-bed gave to said Marable a child, which she confessed to have stolen three years before, the date of the disappearance of Annabel Winter?"

"I know nothin' of the chile ye're speakin' of," persisted Stockley, in low, hoarse tones. "I have nothin' of hers in my keepin',—if you want to sarch the house thar's the key to the chist," and he threw a key upon the table as he spoke.

"Ha, ha! this is cool! Why, man, your mental vision is

obscured ; your memory has utterly failed, or else you've grown muddled over the two or three gossamer drinks you've taken. But this can't be, for you're known to have a hard head. Come, let's take another drink," he continued. "Don't be afraid of it—a half-glass at least ; it will clear your mind of its mists. You *must* see, Ansley, that the evidence in this case is very clear. Of course you can't permit it to come before the courts."

The two men were now standing up beside the table on which stood the half-filled glasses. When Stockley replied, it was with more animation than he had yet used, and in a manner which showed that he understood the covert threat of the other.

"I tell ye I don't know Jeems Ansley, nor Horace Winter. But *you'll* not bring it into cort. I did know a Winter onst,—only one, a Charles Winter ; 'twas some ten years gone, in Richmond. No, *you'll* not bring it up. This is all the Winter I knows of ; and the last I heerd of him he was in pris'n, put thar fur usin' another man's name too free."

"Yes, yes," interrupted the other, "but what has this man to do with this case?—a man whose death by drowning was reported in the papers, if I mistake not, some seven or eight years ago. Let the poor devil rest."

"Ay, if a man who 'ud leave a sickly wife and a puny brat to shift for themselves——"

"Oh, h—! man, cease prating of that fellow," again interrupted Brenham, with evident impatience in his tone. Then taking up his glass, and dismissing with an effort whatever of chagrin he may have felt at his failure, he said, "Well, well, we will drink our grog, Ansley, or Stockley, or whatever you call yourself, and I will leave you. I must seek elsewhere the information I want, I suppose. Yet I may come again ; the feast of reason and flow of *spirits* which has characterized the present visit will certainly urge me to renew it. Here's to thy luck, thou jolly fisherman,—such luck as thy many and shining virtues deserve !"

There was a hardness in his voice while uttering these words which belied their friendliness. Immediately after emptying his glass he went out. The surly fisherman, who had made no reply to the last words of the other, followed him to the door. Standing in the low doorway, he watched the retreat-

ing form of Brenham until he saw him get into his boat and start off down the river.

"Ho, ho, ho," he chuckled to himself as he turned within. "I didn't know him at first,—George Brenham is it? Ho, ho—I'm not ready *yet* for a partnership with *him*. No, no, *he'll* not trouble me, he knows better; but I must watch him."

CHAPTER VI.

AT MR. BRIGGS'S SCHOOL.

IN a large, red-brick house, situated on the top of a high hill in Rome, Mr. Oliver Briggs taught a boys' school. The building was two-storied, and joined on to one end was a wing, in which the family of the principal lived.

Out of school Mr. Oliver Briggs was a quiet, unobtrusive man, having little to say to people he met, unless, perchance, he met a parent of one of his bright or industrious pupils; and then he would stop, and with real pleasure speak to that parent of his child, of his brightness, of his industry. Yes, Mr. Briggs had a few smart boys, a few industrious boys, and a few good boys; with these, of course, were mingled the dull, the idle, and the vicious. To the parents of the three last classes he never, or very seldom, spoke of their children. If he could not conscientiously speak well of them, he would say nothing. For this reason he was not popular with everybody, and, had he been alone, he would have suffered loss by his scrupulous regard for the truth.

But Mr. Briggs had an assistant, Mr. Stubbins, who did not seem to be at all vexed with the scruples of the principal. Stubbins was somewhat under the medium height, and with a spare figure. His features were large and coarse, and his face wore always an expression of gravity, of responsibility. Though not yet thirty, he was wrinkled about the mouth and eyes, which, with his grave expression, made him look prematurely old. Stubbins had never been seen, either within or outside the school-room, without having a pen or pencil stuck above his ear, and he never went out without carrying in his hand a small bundle of manuscript papers,—compositions, or school-exercises of some kind, of course; and as he went always in a hurry, and with his head reaching forward, he impressed upon all whom he met a sense of his devotion to business. While the principal often avoided his patrons, the

assistant never did ; on the contrary, he would often put himself to much trouble to bring about a meeting with one, which meeting, however, always appeared to be the result of chance. If he saw Mr. Jones several blocks away, coming towards him, it was all well, he had only to keep straight on ; but if Mr. Jones turned he would also turn, would dart down one street and then up another, never losing sight of his man. Suddenly, at some corner, he would be face to face with the unsuspecting Jones. "A pleasant morning, Mr. Jones," he would say. "Am glad to meet you, sir. Am somewhat pressed for time this morning, or I would like to stop and speak to you of Johnny. Ah, sir, he is a fine lad ; and the rapidity with which his young mind is developing is truly wonderful, sir. He is really an extraordinary boy,—a decided genius. But I have an engagement, a very important one ; am sorry, sir, I cannot stop longer. Good-morning, Mr. Jones." And so speaking, he passed on, leaving his patron a happier if not a wiser man. It was this kind of outside work which kept Mr. Briggs's school up to its full number. Another result of it was, that while Mr. Briggs found favor with only a part of the community, Mr. Stubbins was liked by all, and especially did the parents of the dull and bad give him credit for much discernment.

On the first Monday in September, Julian and Paul entered Mr. Briggs's school. The assembly-room was full of boys when they reached the school-house. Mr. Briggs, who met them at the door and conducted them to a seat, was evidently pleased at this accession to his school. The bell had rung but a few minutes before their arrival, and the sixty or seventy irrepressible boys who came in at its summons had at last settled into something like order and quiet, when the door opened and Ned Winter entered. He came forward with a self-confident air, and nodding to the boys on either side. At the desks of some of the larger boys, those who lived in the country, and whom he had not seen since the close of the last term, he stopped to exchange a few words. Having reached, at length, the place where Julian and Paul were seated, he stopped, and as he shook hands with them he said, in a louder tone than he had hitherto used, and looking just above their shoulders with his half-moon eyes, "I'm glad to see you Marables here." At that instant the little bell of the principal

gave the signal for silence. After the organization of the school, which followed, Julian and Paul found themselves, with eight or ten others, most of whom were to be their classmates, in a room situated in that end of the building to which the wing was attached, and the entrance to which was in the rear of the principal's desk. This room was appropriated to the use of the most advanced class of the school. In a larger room, in the other end of the building, Mr. Stubbins presided over the smaller boys, while the intermediate classes had their places in the assembly-room, directly under the eye of Mr. Briggs.

The Marable brothers were to ride in from Innisfel every morning, and to take their dinners with the family of the principal. Mr. Stubbins, who boarded with the family, as soon as the morning session was over conducted the young men to the front entrance of the wing. Mrs. Briggs, a small, delicate-looking woman, who talked incessantly, and with a simper, met them at the door with voluble cordiality, and led them within to introduce them to her young ladies, as she called them. The said young ladies proved to be five in number, ranging in years from four to twelve. The oldest, whom she called Mennie, had a bright, pretty face, and was a light-hearted, quick-witted child, to whom life seemed a perpetual holiday. Resembling her mother in person, she had also her good-nature and volubility, but not her simper. The second, called Rabie, not so pretty as her sister, was yet an interesting child, with her earnest, thoughtful face. Neither of these girls appeared to be in the least constrained by the presence of the new-comers. This was owing, partly, at least, to the fact that there had always been a few boys or young men boarding with the family. And there were now, besides Julian and Paul, four regular boarders, pupils who had boarded there the preceding term.

"Paul," said Mennie, when her mother at last gave her an opportunity to speak, "don't you think they have given us girls the funniest names?"

"Very pretty ones, I'm sure," said Paul, gallantly.

"What their fancy was for naming me Armenia, I can't tell; neither can mamma, except that she *liked* it." Thus Mennie talked at one end of the table, while her mother rattled away at the other. "Now, Rabie, there, who has dark complexion and eyes, she called Arabia,—there's some reason

in *that*. The next, Tennie, gets her name from Tennessee, where we lived before coming to Georgia,—we moved from there about eight years ago. Miss Caledonia, whom we call Callie, was named so because some ancestor of papa's was a Scotchman,—now, wasn't *that* a reason? And the youngest is called Erin,—of course you now understand why; but this time it was one of mamma's ancestors. You haven't seen Erin yet; I shall bring her in to-morrow to make the acquaintance of the new young gentlemen."

"I will be glad to make the little lady's acquaintance," said Paul.

"I know you will say she is pretty," continued Mennie.

"Yes, if she is like her sisters," ventured Paul, not knowing what else to say. But the little smile which curled the pretty lips of the girl showed that she was pleased with the poor compliment.

"She is like Rabie; not a bit like me," she replied. The next instant, turning to Alec Moran, a youth about sixteen years of age, and who sat next to her, she asked him some question relating to Ned Winter.

"Do hush, Mennie," said her mother, before Moran could reply, and speaking a little sharply. "You talk so much, no one else has a chance to say a word!"

"Do hear her!" said the girl, in a whisper, to Alec. "The idea of anybody's talking much where——" Looking up just then and catching her father's eye fixed sternly upon her, she left the sentence unfinished, and remained silent for at least a full minute.

"How many sisters have you, Mr. Julian?" asked Rabie, who had been waiting some time for an opportunity to speak.

"We have two," answered Julian, quietly.

"And two sweet, pretty girls they are," chimed in Mrs. Briggs. "I have seen them a few times at church. Your mother must have an easy time of it, with only two to look after; here I have *five*,—five *girls*; just think of it! Now, if they were boys, I could turn them loose and let them look out for themselves."

"And grow up savages," said Mr. Briggs, the only remark he made during the meal; not because he was disinclined to talk, but rather because he wanted the opportunity.

And thus the dinner hour passed away very pleasantly, on

the whole, and so it passed every day. Mrs. Briggs and her daughters did the most of the talking; Mr. Briggs rarely, and Mr. Stubbins still more rarely, taking any part in it. The latter gentleman, in fact, took his meals, as he did everything else, in a hurry,—as something to be got through with as quickly as possible.

Julian and Paul at once took a high stand in the school: in the school-room with their teacher and classmates, and on the play-ground with all their fellows. The two brothers were together in all their studies, and, with six others, were preparing to enter the State University at its next commencement. Although Paul Marable was the youngest member of the class, yet, before the end of the first month, it was conceded by all his classmates that he was the best scholar in it. And in the athletic and often rough games most popular on the play-ground, the Marable brothers were soon acknowledged leaders. It was evident, too, at least to his school-fellows, that Paul was fast getting to the foremost place among the master's favorites. Yet there was not a boy in school who would have accused him of currying favor with his teacher; he was far above, and they all instinctively knew it, such a principle of action. It is true he valued his teacher's esteem, but he sought it only as every proud and high-minded boy will seek it, in the cheerful discharge of his duty,—his duty both in and out of the school-room.

One afternoon, a few minutes before school exercises would begin, Ned Winter and Julian Marable were lounging on a bench placed beneath a large tree on one side of the play-ground. Three or four other boys rested on the grass close by and on the roots of the tree which came out around its base.

"How do you like reviewing geography, Julian?" asked Ned, rather listlessly. Then seeing that Julian did not comprehend him, he added, "The Briggs edition."

"Oh, yes, I understand," replied Julian, with a languid smile. "Well, I have taken *some* interest in it."

"And which map have you been most interested in?" still queried Ned, speaking with his eyes half closed, and with a hazy look in them, suggestive, to those who knew him best, of the probability of his having stopped at some saloon on his way to school.

"I don't know that I have any decided preference," returned the other.

"No preference, hey? Well, I have. I don't gravitate naturally towards your thoughtful misses, though their eyes may be black and bright; but commend me to your laughing, roguish, nimble-witted girls,—frivolous, if you please, or fast—denn it, what do I care? the faster the better."

"How many seasons have you spent at Saratoga, Ned?" asked Julian, with quiet sarcasm.

"I was not speaking from experience. Of course, a youth of seventeen years can have no experience worth talking of with the fair sex. I was only speaking of the qualities in them which I prefer; was only showing you a piece of my—mental structure, as old Briggs would call it."

"Which is a unique structure, to say the least of it, and, perhaps, the best of it."

"Ah! still satirically inclined. But yonder they are,—the subjects of our discourse."

At that moment Mennie and Rabie were passing from the house on their way to their own school, a school for girls, situated on a neighboring hill. While traversing the little space between the steps and the gate, Mennie caught sight of the group beneath the tree. Ned raised up, and when he saw her looking toward him he waved his hand, just touching with it the front part of his cap; she returned his salute, and then followed her sister through the gate.

"I believe you are interested, Ned, in the fair Armenia," said Julian.

"That's been known for some time," said Alec Moran, one of those sitting at the foot of the tree.

"Oh, yes, of course I am," assented Ned, sinking back into his former lounging position. "She suits that piece of my mental structure I was showing to you just now; that is, she's a child of nature, what the pious world calls *fast*; or rather, this is what she is to be. Let those who can fancy only some coy Dian, or hard-breasted Pallas, turn their eyes away from her. Why, child of twelve summers as she is, nothing would have given her more pleasure than for me to have run after her a moment ago, and gone with her to school, especially if on the way I hinted two or three times that I loved her, and then on parting with her at the gate of the seminary have

asked her for a kiss,—which she would give, too, if she was sure no one would see it!"

"For shame, Ned Winter!" said Julian, standing up as he spoke. "How dare you speak so of the girl? You know your words slander her; and you would not speak them if she had a brother in the school to defend her."

Paul at that moment came up, yet in time to hear his brother's closing words. Before Julian had ceased speaking, Ned was on his feet, as were also the other boys of the group, the latter standing around the two as though they looked for a difficulty between them. Ned stood a moment silent, a little pale, yet perfectly self-possessed, and seemed to be considering what to say. Before he spoke the bell summoned them into the school-room.

"We will speak of this another time," he said, quietly, and moving towards the house as he spoke. The rest followed him within, some feeling vexed with the bell, no doubt, for its untimely summons, and all perhaps more or less disappointed in the degree of resentment shown by Ned at Julian's words.

After school that afternoon, as Julian and Paul were returning home, Julian told his brother all that had passed between Ned and himself in connection with Mennie Briggs, which led to the present breach between them.

"You did right, Julian," said Paul. "I have noticed a disposition on the part of a few of the boys to speak slightly of those girls; and I am sure they do it only because Ned Winter does it. But we will stop it, Julian. They have no brothers, as you said, but *we* will be their brothers. We needn't proclaim it on the school-ground, but we can and *will* stop it."

To this proposition of his generous brother Julian yielded a cheerful assent.

The next morning, before the opening of school, as Julian approached a group of boys on the play-ground, one of whom was Ned Winter, he was a little surprised to hear the latter say, as he came up, in his easy, nonchalant style,—

"There was some misunderstanding between us yesterday afternoon, Julian. I believe I was speaking ill-naturedly of old Briggs's girls, and you checked me. That was right. I don't know what possessed me, for I really like the girls. My recollection of what passed is vague, but I must have said

something very uncalled for, to say the least of it. The fact is, I stopped in at old Jalap's, and got a drink,—yes, *two*,—and, demn it, they got into my head."

Julian, expressing himself satisfied with Ned's explanation, recalled his own offensive words, after which they shook hands, which act seemed to restore completely their former friendly footing.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW PUPIL.

WHEN about two months of the term had been passed, there appeared one morning on the play-ground, in front of the school-house, a country lad, apparently about fourteen years of age. His clothes, though clean, were of the roughest material and patched in several places, his shoes were heavy russet brogans, and he wore on his small head an old silk hat, which was shorn of half its crown. He was slender, with a sallow complexion, pale blue eyes, and lank hair. Under his arm he carried but a single book,—Webster's Speller. A knot of boys soon gathered around the new-comer.

"I wants to see the maister!" he said, in a drawling tone, to the nearest boy, a big, rough fellow, full of mischief, Will Duke by name.

"You do, do you? All right, you shall see him. Do you know him?"

"I never seed him, as I knows on," answered the boy.

"You never? Well, he'll *seed* you, make you look more seedy than you do, if you don't look sharp. Stay here, while I go to bring him."

He went off towards the school-room, leaving the small boys giggling at his poor joke. Presently he returned, bringing with him Ned Winter. The latter, much to the amusement of the boys, was, in his walk and manner, personating the assistant.

"Mr. Briggs is out," said Duke, coming up a little in advance of Ned. "This is the assistant, Mr. Stubbins, who will take charge of you."

The false assistant came up close to the boy, and, with his body bent forward, stared at him for a moment without speaking, the lad in the mean time bowing, and scraping one foot on the ground as he did so, in a very awkward manner.

"And so you have come to enter school, my lad?" at

length spoke Ned. "It is well. The first thing to be done is to get your name—your *name*, my boy!"

"Tim Piper," replied the lad, just above his breath.

"Ah, yes, not John, the Piper's son," continued Ned, drawing forth his pencil and roll-book *a la* Stubbins; "nor yet the renowned Peter, but simply Tim, honest Tim Piper. And now, sir, your euphonious appellation being inscribed upon my roll-book, it will be my delightful task to lead you, Timothy, in the paths of usefulness and knowledge. I hope you come prepared to appreciate the advantages you will enjoy within these classic halls. I see you have brought your book,—so far so good. The next thing is your tuition fee, which is ten dollars, and always in advance."

"Ten dollars!" gasped the boy. "I haint got but three. Matt, he give it to me. He said 'twould take me a month, anyhow—I'm sartin he did. And he said, too, when that give out mebbe he could let me have mo'."

"Ah, Matt said so, did he? And who is Matt?"

But before the boy could reply Ned spoke again, and with a changed voice: "Put up your money, Tim, or give it to the man you see coming toward us. He is Mr. Stubbins, the assistant teacher." And then, turning to the latter as he came up, he said, "Good-morning, Mr. Stubbins. Let me introduce you to this young gentleman, who desires to enter school. His name is Tim Piper."

Stubbins, who had accidentally discovered the presence of a stranger lad on the play-ground, had lost no time in making his way to him. After speaking to the boy with that hard-faced cordiality peculiar to himself, he proceeded to take his name, and also to relieve him of the three dollars which he had brought. Then telling him to come in with the other boys when the bell should ring, he went away. The poor boy looked very much as if he wanted to follow him, yet was afraid to do it. He looked so shame-faced and crestfallen, as he stood there surrounded by strange faces, that some of the boys were glad their fun had been spoiled by the unexpected appearance of Mr. Stubbins; but there were others more unfeeling, who felt that they had been cheated of their sport. Among the latter were Will Duke and Ned Winter.

"Will," said Ned, "don't you admire the cut of those garments? I must get the pattern."

"That hat takes my eye," said Will, "and those shoes. I wonder how many *yellow* cows were killed to get the pair?"

The boy stood, protesting only by his looks against this ungenerous treatment. There were many in the crowd, too, whose faces showed that they would protest against it were smaller boys than Ned Winter and Will Duke engaged in it. At that moment Julian and Paul Marable came up.

Duke continued his teasing.

"I say, Ned, look at these, will you?" pointing, as he spoke, to the large patches on the boy's knees, which differed a little from the rest of the cloth in color. "I tell you, Tim, you're some on a patch!"

"My mother did it," said the boy, with quivering lips.

Just then Paul Marable pushed through the crowd, and took his stand by the boy's side.

"Will Duke," he said, his eyes flashing with the indignation he felt, "you are carrying this too far; it must stop. If you want to worry somebody, worry some one who can protect himself."

A little shout of applause from the crowd gathered around greeted Paul's act. Duke, who was naturally not a vicious boy, might have been willing to let the matter drop, had it not been for the decided approbation given by most of the boys to Paul's interference. This nettled him.

"And who gave you authority, Paul Marable, to put a stop to it?" he asked, while an angry flush began to spread over his face.

"All I have to say is, Will," answered Paul, now speaking calmly, "that I don't intend to see the boy ill-treated."

"You had better wait until he *is* ill-treated; it will be time then to talk about stopping it. I have always liked you, Paul Marable, and if you had asked me to let the boy alone I might have done it. But d—n me if I like to be ordered by a boy to stop doing anything, especially when it don't concern him!"

"But it does concern me to see the weak imposed upon, and I won't stand by quietly and see it done."

"You won't? How will you prevent it, eh? Fight about it? Recollect I'm bigger and stronger than you are."

"If nothing else will do it, I'm ready to settle it that way."

"Not with Will Duke, while I am here," said Julian,

pushing himself in front of his brother. "Stand back, Paul; not a word; I'm nearer Will's size than you are."

"Demn it, boys!" began Ned, looking across the scene with his strange eyes, "don't make a row! I hate rows. Paul is right, Will; we *were* a little hard on the boy, and I was just about to propose——"

"Oh, yes, 'just about to propose' to let him alone, no doubt," interrupted Duke, sneeringly. "I don't like to see a fellow get round on the popular side so easily. Julian, I've nothing against *you*, but if I've got to fight somebody, I'd rather it be you than Paul. In fact, I won't fight *him*."

At that moment it occurred to Paul how he might end the difficulty by a word.

"Will Duke," he said, stepping past his brother, "there is no need that you fight anybody. We all know that you are not a coward. I will now take back the harsh words I used at first, and will *ask* you, ask it as a personal favor, if you please, not to trouble the boy any more."

"If you had only spoken so at first, Paul!" replied Will. "But here's my hand that I'll not trouble him myself, nor let anybody else do it."

Paul grasped the proffered hand with cordial alacrity. As he did so the boys raised a shout, showing that for once in their school-boy life, at least, they were glad to see a difficulty settled amicably.

Such was Tim Piper's introduction to the boys of Mr. Briggs's school. Rude it was, no doubt, and harrowing to the poor boy's feelings while it lasted, yet it proved serviceable to him in the end, not only in disposing all the boys more kindly to him, but in bringing him real friends.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FAMILY AT HOME.

It was Christmas Eve. A cheerful fire blazed upon the hearth in Mrs. Marable's room. In front of the fireplace stood a table with a lighted lamp upon it. By this, in a large arm-chair, sat Mr. Marable, with a newspaper in his hand. He was not reading, however, for he was listening to Bertha, who had drawn her chair close to his. On the opposite side of the table sat Mrs. Marable, and seated on an ottoman at her feet was Hattie, talking with childish glee about what Santa Claus would bring her on the morrow.

"Lucy," said Mr. Marable, directly, "I think our boys might forego their reading for to-night, and spend the evening with us here."

"I, too," she replied, "was just wishing they were here. I will go and call them."

When she returned, stopping at the back of her husband's chair, she bent over it, and taking in both her hands the still handsome face of the gray-haired man, she touched with lips yet youthful his broad, white brow.

When the boys came in their mother said,—

"Your father and I were just thinking, my sons, that of late you have quite forsaken us for your books. And so to-night, looking around upon our cheery room and upon our happy little girls, we could not but miss our dear boys, and wish for their presence with us."

"I am glad to be so remembered, mother," said Paul, "and I willingly exchange the company of Macaulay, fascinating as he is, for that to which you have called me."

"And from whose company have we drawn you, Julian?" asked his mother, as he took a seat beside her.

"From him at the touch of whose harp 'nations stood entranced.' I have been wandering with Byron through Athena's ruined temples and along 'Suli's shaggy shore.'"

"Julian, I must put you and Paul, too, on your guard when reading Byron," said Mr. Marable. "His writings are fascinating to minds like yours, but there is a spirit of unbelief and impiety pervading them against which I would caution you."

"It is sad to think," said Mrs. Marable, "that a man so gifted should have led so dark and sullen and miserable a life. I cannot but think how useful and happy his life might have been under other circumstances."

"Yes, but with all his learning, and wit, and genius, he was a graceless fellow, and deserves, I fear, our censure more than our pity. We have reason, too, to suspect the genuineness of even those virtues which he did affect. For did he not, while extolling the patriotism of ancient Greece and Rome, suffer the estrangement of his friends to turn him against his own England, a land which more than any other has nursed and cherished this virtue?"

"But, father," asked Julian, "must he be held responsible for those circumstances of his birth and early training which determined the direction of his life, and with so much force that it was, perhaps, impossible for him ever to turn from it,—impossible for him ever to have that faith in the Christian religion to the want of which you attribute the failure of his life?"

"He will, at least, Julian, be held responsible for that failure. He was wilfully blind. He had eyes to see and ears to hear, but he neither saw nor heard, because he *would not*. He saw and felt the evil there is in the life which he had chosen, and he must have seen the good and beauty there is—something of them at least—in that life to which Christ calls us all, but he would not turn from the former because he loved his sins too well. If he wilfully chose the mess of pottage, he must abide by his choice."

These last words of his father brought to Julian's mind the passage of Scripture, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;" and putting Byron in Esau's place, he wondered how he could be held responsible. There occurred to him also another passage, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand;" and pondering these and similar passages, he wondered if it

was to be with him as it was with Esau and Byron,—if seeing he was not to see, and hearing he was never to understand?

Julian made no reply; to speak further of his perplexities would be, he knew, to open a discussion which he felt would be ill-timed; and not only so, but unsatisfactory; for he had had talks with his father before on this and similar subjects, and the result of them all had been to leave his mind more bewildered, rather than relieved of its perplexities.

"Mother," said Bertha, when she saw that Julian would not reply to his father, "while Hattie and I were standing at the road gate this afternoon two little girls passed by, and they were barefooted, cold as it was!"

"They belong, no doubt, to the family which lately moved into the shanty this side of Silas Dobbs's place," said Mr. Marable. "The reports I have heard of the man are very unfavorable. His name is Bill Camp, I believe?"

"Yes, sir," answered Paul. "Julian and I passed him as we came out of town this afternoon; he was ahead of us, and we saw him reeling along, and then presently fall in the middle of the road."

"Yes, and when we came to him," said Julian, "Paul must stop to set him on his feet again; and when he found at last that the fellow could not stand on them, he insisted on my dismounting to help drag him out of the road. I thought after this was done that we would come on without further delay; but no, I had to wait there, or did do it, until Paul could gallop back into town and hire a dray to bring out the poor wretch to his home."

"What a dreary Christmas for his poor wife and children!" said Mrs. Marable, sadly.

"Mamma, can I give each of the girls Hattie and I saw to-day a pair of shoes?" asked Bertha.

"Yes, my child, and I will add to them a dress for the mother."

"Will Santa Claus go to their house, too, mamma?" asked Hattie.

"I reckon not, darling."

"Then I will carry to those girls some of the good things he brings to me."

"That is right, Hattie. And so we will hope to make their home a little brighter for them to-morrow."

"And the best way for us, Paul, to assist in lighting up this darkened home," said Julian, "is to bastinado its perverse head, the recreant Bill, until he promises to *bill* his liquor more moderately; what say you?"

"Quite a radical measure," said Paul, smiling at the conceit of his brother, "and one to be thought of, as our worthy preceptor would say, only as a *dernier ressort*."

"And now, my sons," said Mr. Marable, "while your mother and sisters are talking of their plans for the morrow, I will ask if there is any one in the neighborhood whom you would like to help?"

After considering for a moment, Paul answered,—

"I know of one, father, not exactly in our neighborhood, however, whom I would like very much to help. His name is Tim Piper, a boy who is anxious to go to school, but whose father is too poor to send him. He lives about a half-mile this side of Rome, in De Soto."

"You are both agreed upon this boy as the object of your benefaction?" asked Mr. Marable.

"We are," answered Julian.

"You could not have pleased me better, my sons, than by asking me to help this lad. I know something of him; know something, too, of the reception he met with from some of your school-fellows, and by whom he was befriended. I will write a note to Tim's father, which will let him know that his son may continue at Mr. Briggs's school the ensuing year. If you go into town to-morrow, you can stop by and deliver it." Then turning to his wife, he asked, "When will you and the little girls make your round, Lucy?"

"Not until the afternoon," she answered. "It will take some time to distribute our gifts to the servants, and after that is done, I must keep some slight supervision over their dinner. I am anxious that they all may enjoy it."

Thus the Marable family sat and talked on that pleasant Christmas-eve, happy in the society of each other, and happy in caring for others.

CHAPTER IX.

A MAY-DAY ON THE COOSA.

ON the appointed day, early in the new year, Mr. Briggs's school resumed its exercises. Mr. Stubbins, with his stiff hair cut short and brushed back from his narrow forehead, was going about through the school-room, with pencil and roll-book in hand, taking the names of the new pupils. While standing near Ned Winter, he laid his roll-book on a desk near by, while he stopped to examine the books of a boy whose name he had just entered. Ned slyly took up the book, and, quickly inserting among its leaves the best part of a "deck" of cards, quietly replaced it. Soon afterwards a knock was heard at the door. Mr. Stubbins seized his book, stuck his pencil above his ear, and the next instant was bowing to and shaking hands quite vigorously with a gentleman at the door in charge of two little sallow, white-headed urchins. The stranger came in, but declined to take a seat; so they stood just within the door, in full view of the school.

"Am glad to see you, Mr. Busby," said the assistant. "Mr. Briggs, our worthy principal, has not yet come in; he will be in presently, sir. In the mean time I will take charge of your sons; and a pleasant duty it is, sir, to place upon our list the names of two such fine-looking lads. Such bright, intelligent faces they both have! Just give me their names, Mr. Busby, and I will write them down, and then assign them seats."

So saying, Mr. Stubbins drew his pencil from its place and opened his book. As he did so several cards slipped out and fluttered to the floor. He started back aghast, and with his hair now perfectly erect. "Why, what's this?" he stammered. "Can this be the book of Sylvanus Stubbins? I'll see." In turning to the fly-leaf, the rest of the cards slipped out and fell to the floor. The boys, who had enjoyed the scene from the first, now burst into unrestrained laughter;

and, to add to Mr. Stubbins's embarrassment, the stranger threw himself back and broke into a loud horse-laugh. It was almost too much for the poor assistant, who stood, blushing, and unable either to comprehend the situation fully or to quell the noise. He knew that a trick had been played upon him, for he had been so often the recipient of such favors from the boys that he was usually on the look-out for them. For instance, he never left the school-room to go into the streets without first looking well to his coat-tails, to see that he bore off no useless appendage. But now he had been taken so completely off his guard, and the presence of Mr. Busby adding to his confusion, he knew not what to say or do. It was amusing to some, but had come to be painful to others, to see the efforts which he made to bring back to his face its lost expression of dignified importance. He was somewhat relieved by the departure of Mr. Busby; but it was not until after order had been restored by the entrance of the principal, that he began to look like himself again.

"Mr. Stubbins," said Mennie, that day, at the dinner-table, "I understand that you love cards so well, you carry them about with you in your pocket-book."

Mr. Stubbins appeared not to hear.

"Oh, come, Mr. Stubbins," she continued, "you heard me. I want you to teach me how to play whist."

But he, raised as he had been, after the "straitest sect," answered her only with a blank stare.

"If he would teach you *to be* whist," answered her mother, "it would be the best lesson you have ever learned, I think."

But Mennie paid no attention to her mother's words.

"Lor', Mr. Stubbins," she exclaimed, "I do believe you have one of those cards stuck behind your ear!"

Before he could think, Mr. Stubbins had struck at it, as if he were knocking off a bee, and struck his pencil into his plate of soup. This so mortified him that he got up and left the table. Mennie, who was now sorry for having teased him, followed him out. Presently she returned, bringing him with her, he looking rather sheepish, but she smiling, and saying, as she resumed her seat,—

"I have promised, mamma, to say no more about those hateful cards, so don't scold me."

Sometimes Julian and Paul chose to spend the time inter-

vening between dinner and evening-school in Mr. Briggs's library, the latter having asked them to do so whenever they felt so inclined. They did not here, however, always have a quiet time. Mennie and Rabie often joined them, and though they would each select some book with the intention to read it, yet they always managed to do much more talking than reading. Occasionally Ned Winter would join them here. At first it seemed as if he only came to read, resisting, as he did, all attempts to draw him into conversation. This seemed an easy thing for him to do; and then, after a while, it seemed equally easy for him, his book being laid aside, to make, by his fantastic humor, the hour pass quickly to all within the room.

As the term advanced, a great change could have been observed in Will Duke. Once rude, both in act and speech, he was fast coming to be known as one of the best-tempered boys in the school. Once he had been careless of the rights of others, especially smaller boys, but now it was noticed that none were more mindful of them than he. It might have been noticed, too, that he showed a decided partiality for the companionship of the boy who once dared to rescue a weaker boy from his own unjust hands.

This partiality of his for Paul was once expressed by Ned Winter, with more force than truth, perhaps, in a conversation with Julian.

"There is nothing," he said, "that Duke would regard so much of a privilege as an opportunity to fight for Paul Marable."

The first day of May came, at length. On this day the pupils of the several schools of Rome were to unite in a picnic excursion down the Coosa River,—which is formed, at Rome, by the junction of the Oostanaula and Etowah Rivers. The *Pelican*, a large stern-wheel steamer, at the appointed hour, received the children, together with their parents, and started down the river. The place selected was a large, well-shaded lawn, about twelve miles from Rome, and on the right bank of the river. This lawn was kept clean of shrubbery, and was intersected with many walks. Through the midst of it flowed a small, bright stream, over which, wherever the walks crossed it, rustic bridges had been thrown. This lawn belonged to the residence of the father of Alec Moran.

The day was balmy, and all on board enjoyed the hour's ride. At one time, during its progress, Paul, holding Hattie by the hand, and standing near the pilot-house, was surprised to hear himself called by the man at the wheel, a man of twenty-eight or thirty years, and with a rough, bronzed face.

"Come nigh, Mister Paul Marable," said the man, with his eye fixed down the river. "I'd speak a word with you."

Paul drew nearer, as desired.

"You don't know me," continued the man, "in course you don't, but I know you; and Tim Piper is the lad that p'inted you out to me. I made him do it, afore the boat started, along of what he told me in the winter of yer standin' by him the day he started to school. And then o' Christmas-day you come to let him know that he needn't stop school, that yer father would pay his schoolin' fur another year. I was atryin' to pay it, seein' how he was so anxious to git it, but the family had to have bread, and I didn't see how I could give it to 'em an' pay the boy's schoolin' too; his daddy, as you knows of, I reckon, was crippled in a mill, and hain't been able to work since. Yer father is a good man, Mister Paul, an' that's what you will be,—a good and a brave man. Yes, brave to help the poor, and that, too, when they can't help you back,—but yet—and yet—the day may come, who knows, and sooner than anybody thinks, callin' on 'em to risk, yes, to give their lives to keep you or yourn from harm." This last sentence he spoke in a lower tone than he did the others, and as if to himself.

As Paul did not answer immediately, he added,—

"Tim is my sister's child. You've heerd him speak of me, I s'pose—of Matt Goodson?"

Paul answered that he had; and then he went on to speak of how well Tim was improving his time, and of the favor he was in with both his teacher and schoolmates. As he finished speaking, the boat came in sight of the expected landing.

Two hundred children turned loose in a shady park, and on a balmy day, are certain to enjoy themselves. They played merry games, they hung upon the rustic bridges and over the bright waters of the brook that reflected their laughing faces, and the older ones promenaded the clean walks, or formed into groups upon the green sward and danced to the music of the band, which came with them from the city. In all the crowd

there was one who did not join in the general merriment,—it was Julian Marable. He stood off, silent and alone. His mother passed by him once.

"Julian," she said, "there stands a girl who has no partner in this game. Won't you take her as yours, and join in the play?"

"I will, mother, to please you," he answered, as he moved towards the girl.

"No; not to please me alone, my son, but to please the child and yourself."

Julian exerted himself to please for a while, and succeeded. But the game being ended, he was moving away, when Ned Winter called him back.

"Don't leave us, Julian," he said. "We want you, you rather than any one else, to make our set complete. Come, you have played Diogenes long enough. Can't you persuade him to stay, Mennie?"

"I do not know much about Diogenes," replied the girl, "only that he was a horrid old Greek who lived in a tub. Tell me something more of him, Mr. Julian, that I may know how you have 'played' him?"

"Diogenes, Miss Mennie," said Julian, "was an old philosopher, very wise and witty; but exactly how he passed his time is not known. It is said of him that he once went about the streets of the city, in the daytime, with a lighted lamp in his hand, saying that he was trying to find a man. It is not written of him that he ever thus sought for a woman; in fact, there is reason to believe that he never did. Now, whether this was owing to indifference to the fair sex, or because he could find them readily without the aid of his lamp, I will not attempt to say."

"Your own account," replied Mennie, "proves that you *have* played Diogenes. Now you can only redeem your character by staying with us. Stay at least through the next game."

Julian consented, and with seeming heartiness, yet he did not linger after the game was ended. If he found any pleasure in mingling in the gay and noisy throng, it was different in its kind from that which others found in it. In one sense he had never been a child; he had never, or seldom, laughed the careless laugh of childhood, and had never known its un-

restrained *abandon*. A spirit had early come to him, which, taking possession of his child's spirit, had led him into paths which lay not through the flowery meads of childhood, and still was leading him on in ways his best friends would have had him shun, but which to him possessed already a resistless charm.

The day, so full of happiness to most of them gathered there, wore on. The dinner-hour came and passed. A few more hours given to mirth and joy, and the shadow on the sun-dial that stood in the lawn near the house reached four; then the whistle of the boat's engine gave warning to all that the hour for their return had arrived. In another half-hour the Pelican, with its precious cargo of souls, was steaming up the Coosa.

The river was lower than usual. There had been no difficulty in descending it, but about one mile from Rome there were shoals, which were difficult to ascend when the river was as low as it was now. When these shoals were reached the captain stationed the boat's hands, armed with long poles, that, in case the boat did collide with the bottom of the river, they might assist the engine either to pull back or to go forward. As was expected, the boat grounded, coming to a full stop. It being very evident that she could not advance, the engine was reversed, and the efforts of the crew were directed to pushing her back down the stream, that, when clear of the rocky bottom, she might make trial of another passage. The boat proved to be more firmly aground than was at first supposed, for not until after a half-hour's hard work did she swing back free into deeper water. Just then a cry was raised which sent a thrill of horror to all on board; it was the cry of *fire*. Immediately afterwards, flames were seen issuing from the captain's room, which was on the upper deck, and almost underneath the pilot-house. The captain at once ordered a portion of his men to the pumps, and the rest to seize their buckets and dip water from the river. Almost immediately the pumps were reported not in working order; and only three or four buckets could be found, and these had to have ropes attached to them before they could be used. At the first alarm Mr. Marable gathered his family together in one place. Leaving Paul with his mother and sisters, he bade Julian follow him, intending to assist in subduing the flames. When he saw the progress

the fire had already made, and the lack of buckets, he believed it impossible to save the boat. The captain had likewise reached this conclusion, for, as Mr. Marable reached his side, he was shouting to the pilot, who still stood to his wheel, notwithstanding the proximity of the fire, to run the boat to the land. While this was being done, he made several of the hands get ready a couple of heavy planks to bridge the space that would necessarily be between the boat's prow and the bank. As soon as these were ready, the bottom of the boat struck the shelving shore; but the space between the lower deck and the top of the bank was found too great to be bridged by the planks held in readiness for this service. "To the other side!" shouted the captain to the man at the wheel. The boat swung around, and was soon crossing the stream to the opposite bank. This proving to be much less shelving than the other, the prow of the boat came within easy reach of firm land.

No sooner were the planks run out, than a big, round-faced man made a rush for them, while the crowd behind prepared to throng the narrow causeway. But Mr. Marable, who had been asked by the captain to assist him, sprang before the frightened man, and, seizing him with nervous force by the arm, pushed him back. "Stop, sir!" he shouted. "Come another step and I'll throw you into the river!"

The fleshy gentleman recoiled before the resolute tones and flashing eyes of the gray-haired but vigorous man before him. Mr. Marable, seeing that he now had the attention of those in the rear, again spoke: "Let every person in the boat keep quiet and follow directions, and all will yet be well. Let no one attempt to leave the boat by these planks until it has been made secure to the bank by the hawser which is being carried out. This will be done as quickly as possible, and then the women and children must be the first to leave."

In the mean time, the unchecked flames were breaking through the upper deck and encircling the pilot-house. Would the pilot, seeing the danger to himself, keep the boat to its place until it could be secured? Many lives were depending on the courage and fidelity of this man. Hence it was that Mr. Marable constantly turned his eyes, full of eager interest, towards the pilot-house. He watched the flames as they mounted up with fearful rapidity. And now he sees that

they have completely encircled the pilot-house, and are darting their long and lambent tongues through it from side to side; and now he sees them playing about the head and winding around the stalwart arms of the brave man who, standing like a statue, seemed to defy them. Yes, he is a brave man, and will stand at his post to the last, for the boat is now firmly attached to the bank, and the egress of the frightened multitude thronging its decks has commenced.

As soon as Mr. Marable was relieved by the captain of the post he held at the end of the planks which formed the way of exit from the boat, he hurried towards the stern, intending to assist, if possible, in the escape of the pilot from his perilous position. The man was still at his wheel, the smoke and flame having prevented him from seeing the completion of those arrangements which secured the boat to its place. Mr. Marable, approaching near enough to be heard above the roar of the flames, shouted to him that the boat was now made fast, and to make his escape by jumping from the platform of the pilot-house into the river. The man heard his words, for the next instant he sprang through the flame-enveloped door, gave a wild leap into the air, and, with his garments afire, fell, with a hissing noise, into the water below.

As the leap was made, Mr. Marable spoke hurriedly to Julian, who still followed him, "Julian, help me save this man."

Father and son hung upon the edge of the boat in readiness to seize the pilot as soon as he should rise to the surface of the water. They were almost immediately joined by Will Duke, who insisted on relieving Mr. Marable of the duty he had undertaken, saying that Julian and himself would bring the man to land should he reappear. Mr. Marable yielded, but remained near by, that he might be ready to give assistance should it be needed. After several minutes had passed the body of the pilot reappeared at the surface of the water, but it floated up like a body without life. Ere it could again sink, the two young men had seized it. They succeeded in bringing it to the shore; here they were met by several of the boat's hands, who, taking charge of the lifeless body of their comrade, bore it to the top of the bank.

In the mean time the boat had been emptied of its human freight. Matt Goodson was the only victim of the catastrophe. His appearance, as he lay stretched upon the green earth,

revealed how much he had endured in his efforts to save others. His clothing was half burnt off, his hair was singed, and even his face bore marks of the fire upon it.

At length a lad with sandy hair, and dressed in an ill-fitting suit of brown jeans, came and knelt beside the dead man. The poor boy had known but few friends in his humble life, and one of these was now lying lifeless before him. Silent tears fell from his eyes as he gently took one of the man's scarred hands in his, and softly moaned out, "Poor Matt! poor Matt!" He was presently led away by Paul Marable, who conducted him to a neighboring farm-house, where a large number of their party were awaiting vehicles from Rome. The body of the pilot was soon afterwards borne away in charge of his boat-mates.

Poor Matt, rough and unlearned he was; a wild, roving fellow he had been; of little worth considered in this world, where tinsel is so often taken for pure gold. But he was dead now, and in his death he struggled up, and stood before his fellow-men a man!—a man who shrank not back when duty called him, though it brought him face to face with death.

CHAPTER X.

BETWEEN ROME AND ATHENS.

ON the last day of August Julian and Paul bade adieu to Innisfel. Mr. Marable had already given his sons full instructions as to their course. By their mother this separation was looked forward to with dread; but having looked forward to it, even from the infancy of her sons, she was the better prepared to endure it; moreover, she had great confidence in her boys—what mother has not? Bertha and Hattie had been duly admonished against crying, yet, when the moment came to say good-by, the tears would come to their untrained eyes.

The two young men were joined, at the depot in Rome, by those of their late schoolmates who had proposed with them to enter Franklin College at that time.

About half the distance to Atlanta was passed. The train had stopped at a small village at the base of a mountain, where it would be detained ten or fifteen minutes, waiting for the up train. Some of the passengers, tired of sitting, left the coach to walk about the straggling village during the time of their detention. Among these were several college-bound young men. Presently the arrival of the other train warned the stragglers to return to their own. Just as the latter started, Winter and Moran entered it together, and the next minute Paul came in somewhat breathless, from having had to run to catch it. He took a seat just in rear of the one occupied by Julian. Ned Winter, who was seated in front of Julian, turned round to the latter and said,—

“You should have seen the last adventure of our Chevalier Bayard. It was that which made him so late getting in.”

“What was it?” asked Julian.

“While Moran and myself were standing near the station-house,” continued Ned, looking with his crescent eyes across Julian’s shoulder towards the stranger that sat by Paul, “we

saw not far off an individual who instantly fixed our wandering eyes. Said individual had on a stove-pipe hat, a flaming necktie, fastened with a large pin, and sported upon a pug nose a pair of gold spectacles. He wore a linen duster, and twirled in one hand a gold-headed cane. Said individual was short in stature, that is, his body was short; his legs, which were sufficiently long, were small, and encased in tights; his face was graced with fuzzy side-whiskers and an incipient moustache. Pardon these details. This mountain Adonis was discoursing to two mountain nymphs, one of whom looked as though she felt herself to be one too many, but who could not leave because the other, with a mischievous twinkle in her eye, held her tightly by the hand. Moran, having some curiosity to know the subject upon which this trio were discoursing——”

“Not I, Winter, I assure you,” interrupted Alec.

“No interruptions, this is *my* story,” said Ned, with a wave of the hand. “Well, to proceed. The result of this curiosity was that—they drew nearer to us. But the shrill whistle of the up train, which just then arrived, startled our Adonis, who, speaking his adieus hurriedly, turned from his fair companions. We were near enough to learn his euphonious name; it is Blivins. As he turned away he ran against a half-grown mountain lassie, who had on her arm a basket of apples, with which she was hastening to the newly-arrived train. But I must hasten; descriptions are tedious. There was a shock; result of shock—apples running over the ground and apple-girl standing by crying. Our chevalier passes by, stops, surveys scene. Quickly resolves—quickly picks up basket, begins to gather apples. Two swine hurry to scene—charitable swine—would assist in business. Chevalier rises, kicks at officious swine, misses aim, falls. Chevalier rises again—stone in each hand—lets fly first, it *must* be presumed, silent malediction at obnoxious beasts. Stones then fly—effect good—swine retire, leaving chevalier master of the field. All the apples being replaced in the basket and restored to the girl, our chivalric knight then drew forth his handkerchief, with which he proceeded to wipe the tears from the lassie’s face, and telling her as he did so not to cry any more.”

“The little maid was lovely, I suppose?” asked Julian.

“Oh, yes; she was thin, with a sallow face, white hair and

eyes, and minus four front, pearly teeth. Moreover, her dress, though torn, was dirty, and her dainty and stockingless feet had on a pair of cast-off shoes only three numbers too large for them."

"Yes, it *was* a chivalrous act, and none the less so because done to an ill-clad and homely child."

Thus spoke the stranger sitting by Paul, a tall, well-dressed man, with a high, clear brow, and a long black beard.

Just then the coach door opened.

"I recognize your Adonis, Ned," said Julian, in a low tone, of the man who had just entered, and who, standing in the aisle near the door with an impertinent freedom, was staring into the faces of those before him.

Ned silently rose up and went towards the door. His companions were surprised to see him, the next instant, shaking cordially the hand of the young man who stood there. Ned's manner was unrestrained, and there was an expression on his imperturbable face which seemed half a smile and half a sneer.

"This is Blivins," he said, as he looked obliquely across the face of the other, and continued to shake him by the hand. "I knew it was Blivins as soon as you entered the door. What! you don't remember Ned Winter? Don't you remember once, in Atlanta—yes, of course you do; your face reveals that you recall the time. Well, well, let that pass. And now, let me introduce you to some of my friends, young men on their way to college."

"To college—to Athens?"

"Yes, to Athens."

"That is just where I am going," said Blivins, with rising enthusiasm. "I am glad I met you, Winter—glad I met you! Think I *do* remember something of the time you spoke of. But introduce me to your friends."

The young men soon learned, and with some interest, that Blivins had been in college a year, and that he was a member of the class which they expected to join.

Had any one been watching the stranger seated by Paul he would have seen that he slightly started when the names of the two Marables were first mentioned in his hearing, and that he afterwards bent upon them a more scrutinizing look. After a while he said to Paul, speaking in a low tone,—

"Your name is Paul Marable, I learn from your companion, and your father's name is——"

"Philip Marable."

"I thought so. I once knew your father. Your brother is like him."

"Where did you meet him?" asked Paul.

"It was years ago—in Athens, I believe," the gentleman answered, in a careless manner; and then instantly changed the subject. In the conversation which followed, and which lasted until they reached Atlanta, this stranger proved himself to be a well-read and well-travelled gentleman. Paul was charmed with his descriptions of persons and places he had seen; and he, on his part, seemed to take pleasure in leading Paul to make criticisms on the books which he had read.

After they reached Atlanta, just before leaving the coach, the stranger took Paul by the hand. "I am glad," he said, "to have met the son of Philip Marable. I am not disappointed in him. I will watch his future course with interest. Good-by." Saying which, he stepped from the door of the coach, and was quickly lost to view in the multitude that thronged the car-shed.

CHAPTER XI.

JULIAN SURPRISES HIS FRIENDS.

THE next day the young men from Rome arrived in Athens. They were assigned rooms in one of the spacious buildings on the college campus. The same afternoon they found board with a widow lady, a Mrs. Mundy, who supported herself and two maiden daughters by taking some dozen or fifteen of the students to board.

Paul Marable devoted himself to his academic duties with his usual ardor. Before the end of the first month he was regarded by his classmates as a candidate for the first honor. In a class of fifty, and when eight or ten have secretly determined on winning this honor, it could not often be decided, three years in advance, who would lead the race to its end. But it became early manifest to the members of this class that the contest would be between two, and between two who, in the outset, had made no determination about the matter. The two rivals, if rivals they could be called, were Paul Marable and Kennon Macdermot. They had entered college the same day, and had been attracted towards each other from the first. Each of them had come to college, not intent upon bearing away its too often empty honors, but rather upon doing his duty. Hence they were rivals, not because each sought to excel the other, but because both were in pursuit of the same object,—duty. The selfish and jealous spirit of rivalry found no place in the breast of either of them : on the contrary, had one failed in a recitation, the other would have grieved rather than have exulted over it.

Kennon Macdermot was one year older than Paul. He was tall and symmetrical ; his well-shaped head was covered thick with glossy black hair ; his eyes were large, and dark brown in color, while his whole bearing was full of grace and expressive of manliness.

Julian was a candidate for none of the honors. The greater

part of the time allotted to study he devoted to reading, and seemed to be content if he could maintain a moderately good stand in his class.

Mrs. Mundy kept a first-class boarding-house. She had once been the wife of a wealthy merchant, but he breaking, and soon afterwards dying, she was left a widow with two small children dependent upon her. A comfortable house in Athens, conveniently located for taking boarders, was the only property left her. To this she came and opened a boarding-house. Being a thrifty housekeeper, and having some acquaintance with the forms and usages of good society, she succeeded. She was a genteel-looking little woman; always self-possessed, and with a cold, calculating look in her small black eyes. Of course this worldly mamma was ambitious for her daughters, and must have them educated and accomplished. To this end they were placed under the best instructors in Athens. But the youthful Misses Mundy having early learned, as if by intuition, the goal towards which all the efforts of their scheming mamma were directed, failed to receive more than a smattering of the long curriculum prescribed for them. They were duly instructed on the piano and harp, yet the popular ballads, with a few waltzes and marches, constituted their stock in music. As an offset to these deficiencies (which they were very clever in concealing), they were graceful dancers, and very sprightly in conversation.

Six months have passed. Epaminondas Blivins has lost sight of his mountain love in the more splendid charms of the elder Miss Mundy. This young lady found it convenient, at times, to have so devoted an admirer as Blivins; and finding, too, some amusement in his attentions, she rather encouraged him. Fortunately for her, it was easy to do this without committing herself. This was owing to a certain faculty which Blivins possessed, enabling him to detect any hint or indication, however slight, that his love was returned.

Blivins was possessed of a self-conceit which nothing could impair, perforate, or even indent: it was absolutely, so it seemed, imperturbable and impregnable. It was impossible to be in his company fifteen minutes and not see this trait written all over him. Hence it was that already more tales were told of him, and he was the butt of more jokes, than any young man in college. Yet he had the happy faculty of never finding out that

anything had gone wrong, or was going wrong, with Blivins. Of course it was impossible that a joke could be successfully played upon *him*; he was obliged to suspect, however, that such attempts were sometimes made, but they were complete failures, for *he* saw nothing funny in any of them.

Next to himself, Blivins was devoted to the fair sex, yet, to but one at a time. This should be regarded as one of Blivins's virtues; another of them was, he never talked of his past loves. But this was, after all, perhaps, a virtue of necessity, being induced by the suspicion that people were inclined to joke him about them. Of his present *inamorata*, however, he was always ready to speak, that is, to his confidential friends, of whom he had a great number. In fact, it came to be suspected, at last, that Blivins was hardly happy except when he was thus employed.

Miss Rosa Mundy was eighteen, and just two years older than her sister Laura. But some of the seniors were accustomed to hint that these young ladies were rather a long time in passing beyond the ages eighteen and sixteen. It is true that Laura received attentions as a young lady when the present seniors were freshmen, but that only proved that the young ladies were precocious. Blivins was eighteen two months before, and Miss Rosa had then told him—confidentially, of course—that she would soon be eighteen. Certainly she knew better what her age was than those ungallant seniors.

During the first six months of Julian Marable's college life, he never spoke to a young lady. Sometimes at the dinner-table, and sometimes in the parlor, where, with others of his fellow-boarders, he occasionally lingered for a few minutes after supper, he would catch the dark eyes of Laura Mundy looking into his own, and with an expression in them which, for a moment, urged him to her side. But he had uniformly resisted this inclination.

It was Friday evening. A new resolution came to Julian at the supper-table; it came immediately after one of those charming glances from Laura, just mentioned. That evening Julian lingered in the parlor longer than usual; much longer, for the last retiring boarder left him there alone with Miss Laura. Miss Rosa was getting ready—this Julian knew—to go with Blivins to a musical entertainment at Beethoven Hall.

"Miss Laura," said Julian, as soon as they were left by

themselves, "it would give me much pleasure to have you go with me to the entertainment at the hall. Will you go?"

Laura's surprise at this proposition made her hesitate a moment, but her reply assured Julian that it was accepted with pleasure.

"Yes, Mr. Marable, I will be glad to go. I will be ready in a few minutes," she said, as she left the room.

Presently Blivins came in, and soon afterwards the two sisters entered the room together.

After they had reached the hall, and had been seated long enough to take a brief survey of the people in the pit and in the opposite boxes, Laura, directing Julian's attention to a couple some distance immediately in front of them, said,—

"You see the young lady with Mr. Houghton,—do you know her?"

"Yes, by sight," replied Julian. "She was pointed out to me, some months ago, as the belle of Athens."

"And you think her beautiful, do you not?"

"I do—very lovely," replied Julian, with somewhat of interest.

"Mr. Houghton seems quite devoted."

As Laura said this Julian thought she betrayed a little pique: and remembering to have seen Houghton, who was a member of the senior class, quite as devoted to her on several former occasions, he was able to account for it to himself, he thought.

"We can't be surprised at his devotion when we look at its object," replied Julian.

"Ah, I see that you, too, are smitten. I will expect to hear soon that Mr. Julian Marable has entered the already crowded lists of those contending for the hand of the fair Miss Julia."

As she said this all evidence of her pique vanished. There was a bewitching smile on her lips, and a coquettish glance in her dark eyes as they looked into those of her companion. Julian felt the charm of both smile and glance.

"I see before us many young men looking into bright faces beside them," he replied, "but Julian Marable has no cause to envy any one of them his place."

Her eyes fell before his, and a slight blush—Julian wondered if it were called up at will—mantled her cheeks.

Just then Paul Marable and Ned Winter came together to the entrance of the pit. Paul went down its aisle alone. As he passed close to where Miss Julia Burnett sat, that young lady spoke to him; he stopped, and she making room for him, he sat down beside her.

"I see that your brother is acquainted with Miss Julia Burnett," said Miss Laura.

"Yes, Paul is acquainted with most of the young ladies in town," answered Julian. "He became acquainted with Miss Burnett soon after his arrival in Athens, through Macdermot, who is her cousin."

The opening strains of the orchestra now interrupted for a while the conversation between these two. Julian listened with eager attention to the music, but not as an amateur; it was rather its power to enliven the fancy, and to stimulate the best impulses of the soul, which he enjoyed.

"Mr. Marable," said Laura, as the music ceased, "I want to put your brother on his guard against a certain young man; I mean Mr. Winter. He was heard to say (some weeks ago, it was, and he was speaking to one of his classmates), 'I will never rest until Paul Marable is as big a devil as Ned Winter.' It is a coarse remark for me to repeat, but I am satisfied he made it, and seeing them come in together just now determined me to tell it to you."

Julian thanked her for her friendly interest in Paul. "But the remark is," he went on,— "and no one knows it better than Ned himself,—a very idle one. Ned is a wild fellow, but has such a quaint humor always, and so much originality, that Paul is attracted towards him in spite of his loose ethics. But, though the remark is wholly idle, as I said, yet I am glad that you mentioned it, because it will not do for Paul to be regarded as one of Ned Winter's familiars. Being, as he is, a candidate for the first honor, it is very necessary that he receive no prejudice against him from the faculty on account of the company he keeps."

Towards the close of the concert, Laura again directed Julian's attention to the trio in front of them.

"Look at Mr. Houghton," she whispered, "he is surely offended with some one. See how erect he sits, and how sullen he looks. He is worried, I think, because Miss Julia seems more interested with your brother than with himself."

"Yes,—he is in an ill-humor about something," replied Julian; "but if he thinks to frighten Paul away by his ugly scowl he will only prove himself to be a silly fellow."

Miss Julia never perceiving that her escort was offended, he continued, until the close of the entertainment, to scowl across her at his more youthful but more favored rival.

After Julian parted from Laura that evening, he confessed to himself, as he went on alone to his room, that he had found a charm in the girl which he had not expected. On the other hand, Laura was encouraged by the experiences of the evening. With the intuition of a coquette she had learned much of Julian's nature,—that though it was cautious, it was susceptible. Her object was simply to attach him to her as a lover. She did not think of marriage; she only thought it would be pleasant to have Julian Marable, hitherto so indifferent to the society of ladies, one of her admirers. Besides, his father was known to be a wealthy man, and his family to be among the first of the State. Thinking over all that had passed between them that night, she felt encouraged. But when, in her room, she stood before her mirror preparatory to disrobing, her dark eyes flashed a brighter lustre, and her bosom swelled with anticipated triumph, as she contemplated, for a moment, that beauty which was, after all, her greatest strength.

CHAPTER XII.

BEHIND THE CURTAINS AT MRS. MUNDY'S.

FOUR other months passed, and then came to the Marable brothers the end of their first year at Athens. During the first part of these months, Laura Mundy saw so little of Julian Marable that she began to think she had been mistaken as to his character, and that he was, after all, the cold and passionless being which he seemed. One Sunday afternoon, however, he waked again her hopes by taking her to walk in the park. After this, until the close of the term, he spent one evening of every week in her company. Laura had other admirers; in fact, judging from the number of these she was the most popular young lady in Athens.

Of late, since Julian went with her to Beethoven Hall, she commenced to take a new interest in music. She resumed her lessons, and practised with such diligence as proved her earnestness in the matter.

Laura had many admirers, nor did these fall away during the commencement exercises which closed the collegiate year. Among these there were several who were not college students—who were marriageable men. But even now there was a secret and unspoken understanding between Julian and Laura which satisfied the vanity of the former, if it filled no deeper well in his heart.

That was a joyful morning for the Marable family on which Julian and Paul reached home.

There was much to tell and to hear.

Old friends, in due time, were visited; among the rest Mr. Briggs's family. The old gentleman seemed much gratified at this visit from his old pupils. He said that he had heard of the stand Paul had taken in his class; that it was only what he had expected of him, and that he did not doubt but he would surpass all competitors, he cared not who they were.

Mrs. Briggs asked after their sweethearts, and both she and the girls were much interested in the account Paul gave of Julian's surrender to the beautiful Miss Laura. In their turn they inquired after many of their old schoolmates, especially Will Duke and Tim Piper. The former had quit school, and gone into a large grocery house in the city; and Tim had improved his time so well that Mr. Marable had determined to keep him at school another year.

The days glided by swiftly because full of happiness. The only bitter drop in them was that they passed at all. With a sigh we look upon our happy moments as they slip from us forever, but who will dare to put forth his hand to stop them? Who will dare to say to his son, "Stand thou still in my heavens, and rest there?"

The first day of September found the brothers back in their old places at Athens. They had been sorry at leaving home, but were now glad to mingle again with their college friends and classmates.

Mrs. Mundy and her fair daughters, with bright smiles, welcomed back the young men. Julian flattered himself that he saw, in Laura's welcoming smile and in the glance of her bright eyes, something more genuine than a pleased expression gotten up for the occasion. Dressed as she was with perfect taste, and with a delicate blush suffusing her face, she looked more charming than ever. Julian thought so, but he resisted the inclination to spend the evening with her, and went off with Ned Winter to a billiard-room.

As the young men went out, the ever-faithful Blivins came in. Miss Rosa was standing in her mother's room when she received his card. As she glanced at the name an expression not very complimentary to its bearer rested upon her face. Tossing the card into the empty grate, she said to the servant, "Give the gentleman my compliments, and tell him that I am sorry a severe indisposition will prevent my seeing him this evening."

"Stop!" said the mother. "Rosa, you had better see him."

"It is not necessary, mother, at all," answered the young lady, carelessly. "If you knew the man as well as I do, you would know that I might refuse to see him half a dozen evenings consecutively and never drive him away. Why, bless the man!—though he saw me on the sixth evening receive com-

pany as he went away, he would come back the seventh, and hear and accept my explanation,—accept it because it was *mine*. Don't you know he believes implicitly everything I tell him?"

"Yes, but you must remember he has been absent now a couple of months. It won't do to refuse to see him the first time he calls."

"Well, well, I suppose I must see him this time. But you don't know what it is to endure his dawdling nonsense for three or four hours. It is getting to be unbearable. Confound the man! I detest him."

"Why, Rosa! what's the matter with you? You surely forget that Mr. Blivins has some—at least moderate—expectations. You forget that Mr. J—— has not proposed yet; and besides, if he should propose, there would be no need to offend Mr. Blivins. You must remember there is often a 'slip between the cup and the lip;' that you can't have 'too many strings to your bow,' and that——"

"Do stop, mother," interrupted Rosa, impatiently. "I have been listening to that sort of stuff all my life. Do try and be original once in a while!"

"Well, don't keep Mr. Blivins waiting too long."

A few minutes elapsed, and the young lady, radiant with smiles, entered the parlor. She met her visitor with a cordiality which was delightfully flattering to his already exuberant vanity.

The last six or eight visits which Blivins had made to the fair Rosa, towards the close of the preceding term, he had made with the determination to have from her a definite answer to his ardent suit. She had managed, however, to thwart this determination.

"Miss Rosa, it seems an age since I saw you last," was Blivins's stereotyped introductory remark, made as he took his seat.

She failed to notice it, but herself led off into an old and well-worn path: "Did I not tell you, Mr. Blivins, that you were a flirt? Do tell me the name of the young lady to whom you have been so devoted the past six weeks?"

Blivins, as he had done fifty times on similar occasions, squared himself, took off his spectacles, and began, with all seriousness, to prove his innocence; he did so, notwithstanding

he rather liked to be called a flirt, and this Rosa knew. His tones were low, and his manner quite tragical.

"It is hard, hard indeed," he said, "that I, I who have never loved but one, should be accused of flirting."

Blivins was so much in earnest, so evidently believed the case to be exactly as he stated it, that the young lady could hardly repress her laughter.

"Why, Mr. Blivins, you have certainly made several young ladies whom I know believe that you loved them."

"Ah! yes, but I was deceived; I am satisfied *now* that I was deceived, and that I have never loved but *one*; and you well know who this *one*, this single star of my life, is."

"No; I did not hear the name of the young lady to whom you were lately so devoted."

"And I heard to-day that the old widower was again very devoted to you?" said Blivins, seemingly disposed, for once in his life, to turn the conversation from himself.

"Don't call him *old*, Mr. Blivins; he is not more than forty-five. But how could you have heard that when you reached town only since noon? You must have made inquiries."

"I heard it confidently asserted, too," continued Blivins, "that you and he are engaged."

"Lor', how people will talk! You don't believe it?"

"No—not if you deny it."

"I can do *that*—*emphatically*!"

"Ah, Miss Rosa, how long and ardently have I loved!—and yet you keep me still in torturing suspense." Here Epaminondas sighed, and leaning forward was about to take one of the young lady's hands, when the sudden ringing of the door-bell made him pause, and straighten up, with a conscious look on his face. The visitor, who proved to be the widower himself, was presently ushered into the parlor, where he was received with much cordiality by the young lady, but with stiff reserve by his youthful rival. The disappointed Blivins remained but a short time after Mr. Jones's arrival. Miss Rosa followed him to the door, and managed to kindle anew his fading hopes, as well by the tenderness of her tone when asking him to come again, as by the little pressure she gave his hand at parting. That evening the widower proposed, and was accepted.

Again Laura Mundy had to confess to herself that she did not know Julian Marable. Day after day passed, and still he came not near her. Nor did he show, since the day of his return, either by word or glance, that he felt any interest in her. This indifference on the part of Julian was the more humiliating to her, because, at the close of the late term, she flattered herself that she had succeeded in attaching him to her securely.

Although Laura did not, in any way, reveal the disappointment she felt, and showed an indifference equal to his own, yet she covertly watched him. She saw, or thought she saw, the shadow of a hidden trouble on his face—hidden at least from her. She longed to know more of his inner life—to see that which was casting its shadow upon his heart. As she looked upon his face, now so cold and thoughtful, she was obliged to confess that she had never gained his confidence.

But one evening, after more than three weeks had passed, Julian took a seat in Mrs. Mundy's well-furnished parlor, and quietly waited until his companions were gone. Then writing a few lines on a card, he still waited. Presently the servant, thinking all the young gentlemen had left, came in to turn down the light. He handed her the card, telling her to give it to Miss Laura.

Fifteen minutes later, Laura entered the room. She came in with her usual self-possession, and her old friendliness of manner. She said nothing which could make Julian think that she had expected this meeting sooner. He was a little disappointed when he saw that she intended to make no reference to his seeming estrangement; nor did she give him an opportunity to offer any explanation of it, even had he been inclined to do so.

"Mr. Marable, I have not yet heard you say how you passed your late vacation—of course you enjoyed it?" This Laura said as she took her seat, and as if she felt a real interest in his answer to it.

"When I look back to it, Miss Laura, it will always seem a green island in the *sargasso* of my life."

"I must look again into my geography, I fear, before I can fully appreciate your fine metaphor," said Laura, with a smile. "I will do that to-morrow, and will not trouble you to explain it now. For *now* I would like to hear something of that one

whom you have never named yet, at least to me; something of that blue-eyed, fair-haired girl whom you have left behind you in Rome, and who claims so many of your thoughts."

"The fair girl," replied Julian, "who claims so many of my thoughts, has neither blue eyes nor fair hair, nor have I left her behind me as you suppose. On the contrary, she has dark hair and eyes, and is here in Athens, and, if I would tell you something of her, she is—well—the witchery of her beauty can wellnigh win me from my thoughts."

Laura's cheek glowed a richer hue while the young man was speaking, but when he ceased, she asked, in a tone slightly shaded with disappointment,—

"Has she nothing but beauty to commend her?"

"Is not that enough?"

"No, you know that you could not be satisfied with that alone. You have told me so much, can you not tell me the name of this fair one?"

"Not now. Won't you play some for me?"

"I have been waiting for you to ask me. I have learned several new pieces and songs since I last played for you. Two of them were selected because—because I thought they would please you. Are you right sure that you deserve to hear these?" she asked, with an arch smile, and thus making the only reference which was made to Julian's late unsocial mood. She then went on, before he had time to reply: "One is a song—the lines by Byron; the other is an instrumental piece, which I heard you say your mother plays. If I play it well, it may serve to recall to you pleasant memories."

She played them both well. At the conclusion of the instrumental piece, which was a selection from one of Weber's operas, Julian said,—

"I thank you, Miss Laura, for both these pieces, especially for the last. It does recall pleasant scenes, and I hope to hear you play it many times."

"Does it win you from your thoughts?" asked Laura.

"No; it intensifies them."

"Yet it pleases you? I thought from a remark you made just now, when speaking of some one's beauty, that you would like to be won from them?"

"Ah, I do not know. They perplex, it is true; they often bewilder; I seem to walk in the shadow of uncertainty—with

mystery above, around, and within me. It seems, at times, as if I know nothing—absolutely nothing.”

“Such thoughts you surely would be relieved of?”

“Perhaps—but there is no relief. I am in the midst of a motionless sea, which is filling up rapidly with drift-weed.”

“You must leave the sea.”

“I know not the way out. Already the drift is measureless. And what is there without? Eternity; and in *this* ocean I know not what there is.”

“You do not know?—does not the Bible teach us what is there?”

“The Bible, mystery of mysteries! In the light of science who now can accept its account of creation?”

“Yet men do accept it.”

“Yes—men who dare not think for themselves. They told me that the discrepancies between Revelation and science were only apparent; that they had been reconciled by Hugh Miller and others. I have read these new interpretations, but they have not given what I sought—certainty. Besides, many facts have recently come to light which must make still other interpretations necessary: such facts as the discovery of human remains in the midst of such surroundings as induce the belief that man was a dweller upon the earth long before the period which the Bible gives as the date of his creation. When are we to have the truth? Oh, I am tired of this seaweed; I want to feel the firm land beneath my step.”

“But why, Mr. Marable, why worry yourself over these questions when you have no hope of settling them? I would cease to think of them.”

“Cease to think of them! I would not, even were it possible. They have been my companions from childhood; and, unnatural as it may appear to you, bright dreams are connected with them. I must still follow them; for the truth, drowned long since, lies somewhere beneath the sea-weed.”

“And your hope is to find it?”

“It is. But pardon me for speaking so long on a subject which must have for you little interest. Let us change it.”

Julian remained until the clock struck eleven, charmed with the conversation of this girl whom he once thought frivolous and heartless. When the door had closed behind him, Laura

returned to the parlor. She stood for a few minutes beside the piano, listlessly turning over the leaves of a music-book.

"Sceptical!" she muttered, as she closed the book suddenly. "With no faith in the Bible! And what is *your* faith, Laura Mundy, that you should thus, in your thoughts, arraign Julian Marable's? Your faith is to be 'all things to all men.' And is this the sum of your creed? If so, then exchange it for Julian Marable's quickly, whatever his may be. Ah, Julian, I understand you now. You will find that I am more interested in the banished subject than you supposed. Yes, I will bring it forward, and then will take the side of orthodoxy; and then, by always yielding to him in argument, and finally coming over unreservedly to his side, I will flatter his self-love, and, at the same time, appear to him a sympathizing friend when the world will have turned upon him a cold and unfriendly look."

Was Laura's object in seeking to attach Julian to her changing?

CHAPTER XIII.

THREE DISAPPOINTMENTS—ATHENS'S PYTHONESS.

THE Christmas holidays were drawing near. Epaminondas Blivins determined to make one more effort to obtain from the reluctant Miss Rosa that avowal which alone was needed to complete his happiness. He was confident that she loved him, yet she had never told him so with that explicitness which he wished. A few of his confidential friends had had the temerity to tell him, at different times, that the widower Jones was going to marry Miss Rosa. Upon these disinterested but simple-minded friends Epaminondas would smile blandly, and say, "Ah! Blivins knows a thing or two."

One evening, a few days before the holidays would begin, Blivins, elated somewhat more than usual with the thought that Miss Rosa would not be able to evade his demands any longer, found himself at Mrs. Mundy's front door. He was a little surprised, as he walked towards the house, to see it illuminated more than usual, and several vehicles in the street about the gate. His surprise was not lessened when, on being invited in, he found the parlor to be quite full of guests. Had he not been doubly near-sighted he would have seen that, on his entrance, smiles came to the faces of many that were there. He would have seen, too, a look of expectancy on the faces of all present, and would have noticed that none of the family were in the room.

Blivins, however, saw enough to make him wonder, and to feel just a little uncomfortable. But he was something more than surprised when, a little while after he had taken his seat, his beloved Rosa, dressed as a bride, appeared in the doorway, leaning upon the arm of the presumptuous Jones, and attended by several couples dressed in white. Hardly comprehending the scene, Blivins rose with the rest of the company; but when the minister, whose presence he had not before noticed, stood forth and began a marriage ceremony, and he knew cer-

tainly that it was his Rosa who was then and there being married to another, he could stand no longer, but, sinking into a chair, buried his face in his hands and groaned audibly. He remained in this position until the ceremony was concluded, and then, in the midst of the congratulations which followed, quietly left the house.

The next day Blivins had a headache, and kept his room. It was a little irritating to his nerves, no doubt, to have, at intervals during the day, some boy to stop in front of his door and shout to one in a distant room, "Ah! Blivins knows a thing or two."

But Blivins was not the man to succumb to his griefs. In less than a week he had proved conclusively to himself, and would endeavor to prove the same to those of his friends who broached the subject to him, that the unhappy Miss Rosa, while in love with himself, had been forced, by circumstances over which she had no control (with which original expression he seemed much pleased), to marry a man whom she really disliked. Had not the lady, with her own lips, told him that she disliked Jones? Certainly she had. Ladies did, he would admit, sometimes say things which were meant to deceive; but they could not deceive *him*; he knew always when they were sincere. The idea that Rosa Mundy had tried to deceive him was too absurd for him to entertain for a moment. The fact was he had believed her every statement, and would always believe them. Thus it was that he could persuade himself that Rosa's was a lamentable fate, forced, as she was, to marry another "by circumstances over which she had no control."

Blivins did not return to college after the holidays.

Julian Marable continued to bestow but little attention upon his text-books. The day came, at length, when twelve speakers were chosen from his class to take part in the exercises of the approaching commencement. Julian failed to obtain a speaker's place. It having been his intention all along to maintain such a rank in his class as would give to him one of these places, he felt the disappointment the more keenly. He knew, too, that he had disappointed the expectations of his parents, and when he learned, as he did some days after the speakers' places were decided, that none of his father's family would attend the commencement, his mortification was much in-

creased by the suspicion that it was on account of his failure they had concluded not to come.

Julian's scepticism was well known in Athens. He had made some effort towards forming within the college a club composed of free-thinkers like himself, the object of which was the propagation of ideas hostile to Christianity. The effort had failed through want of material, only two having been found, and these were lukewarm in the cause, who were willing to join with him in the enterprise. The fact, however, that he made such an effort was known, and not only within the college, but to the citizens generally. His profanity was as well known as his scepticism, and it was suspected that he was falling into dissipated habits. It was hoped by his friends, the professors of the university among the rest, that the effect of his disappointment would be to turn him to more studious and virtuous habits. But these hopes were not realized.

Laura Mundy, shrewd beyond most girls of her age, was doomed to err in her estimate of Julian Marable's character. In attempting to carry out her plan in reference to him, based upon her knowledge of his scepticism, she early learned that he had no desire to proselyte her to his views. She therefore changed her plan; it was to gently oppose him whenever the subject of religion was broached, yet at the same time to show sympathy for what she called his honest pursuit of the truth, and for the supposed isolation which it brought him.

But it was her beauty, aided by a sprightly imagination and by coquettish arts, which made Julian continue, at times, to seek her company. He chose to occupy a neutral ground, yet one very near to the borders of love's garden. She met him there, and very pleasant were the half-concealed intimations of love interchanged between them.

These meetings, however, gradually became less frequent during the latter part of Julian's junior year; and by its close the conclusion had been silently accepted by each that the whispers of love which had passed between them would remain whispers forever. Julian, perhaps, had never intended them to be aught else; but Laura accepted this conclusion reluctantly, for her feelings had become more interested than she at first either intended or believed possible. But raised, as she had been, to regard love as an unreal or affected senti-

ment, she found no very great difficulty in transferring her affections from the cold and tardy Julian to the more ardent Alec Moran, who had recently added himself to the number of her admirers.

In the edge of Athens was a small, unpainted house, with two rooms, one above the other. This house stood in the midst of a small lot, and so surrounded by shrubbery as to be nearly hidden from the view of those who passed along the obscure street which ran close to it.

In this rather gloomy-looking domicile there had lived for more than a quarter of a century an old woman known as Chaffey Phipps. Few were now living who remembered when she first came to Athens, so long ago had it been. Where she came from no one certainly knew; the only answer she ever gave to the question was that she came from Virginia. It was generally believed, however, that she came from across the Atlantic, either from England or Scotland. She did use at times some Scotch terms and abbreviations; but as she used other terms which were clearly English provincialisms, it was thought probable that she had lived in both countries.

She was a tall woman, with a pale face and restless black eyes. Although her age was certainly great, her form was unbent, her hearing still acute, and her eyes undimmed; and, what was remarkable, the years she had spent in Athens seemed to have added nothing to her age,—no one could remember when she looked otherwise than she now did. She wore always a black gown, of a unique fashion, and twisted her gray locks into a fantastic knot on the back of her head, from which fell a single queue; the effect of which was to still increase the singular character of her appearance.

Old Chaffey Phipps was regarded as a woman of much natural shrewdness and force of character. She had, too, a fearless and independent spirit, which enabled her to live alone, and without the aid of charity. Soon after coming to Athens she made known her pretensions as a fortune-teller. During commencements and other periods of public amusement she would erect, at some suitable place, a temporary booth, formed of green boughs, where she sat, ready to give her mystic answers to all who consulted her shrine. Her knowledge of

human nature, aided by a ready wit and means peculiarly her own in gathering information of people, enabled her to give such answers as soon brought her oracle into much repute. Sometimes in giving these responses she would use language which, by its pureness and force, would surprise her hearers, and make them suspect that she had anticipated their visit by preparing for it. The contributions thus laid upon her Delphic altar seemed enough to supply her few and simple wants; if she had other means of support, it was not generally known.

Such was Athens's Pythoness.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTING COMPANY.

THE first four thousand years of the world's history presents a sad spectacle of the instability of national greatness ; and yet to the lover of his race, and to him who has read history aright, it gives the cheering picture of a steadily-advancing civilization. The time required by a people during this period to attain the acme of its power was usually four or five centuries. It rarely or never rested there, but commencing almost immediately to decline, it stayed not its downward course until it had reached, after one or two centuries, the level, apparently, of its first starting-point. Looking only upon the successive changes of this period, it is hard to see in them any evidence of real progress ; but when we view them in the light of subsequent history, of the past nineteen centuries, we are enabled to see not only that there was real progress, but how they were a preparation for that which was to come. At its close Christianity was introduced. Old things were to be done away ; all things were to become new. At that time, the Roman State had reached the pinnacle of its greatness ; immediately afterwards, its decline began. While yet in a state of decadence, the Christian religion took root among its people. As a State it continued to decline, until, at length, it fell, completely shattered, at the feet of its barbarian conquerors. Though national wealth, power, and grandeur were all gone, the people stopped ere they reached the level of their first starting-point ; they were never to be again the savages who chased the wild boar in the forests of Etruria, nor yet the rude outlaws that followed Sylvia's wolf-nursed boys.

In the fifth century Christianity was planted among the barbarous tribes of Germany and Britain. The history of these people from that day to the present, whether we view it in Germany, in the British Isles, or in America, presents the pleasing spectacle of a civilization steadily progressive. Through

nearly fifteen hundred years has the Teutonic family been steadily advancing in knowledge and in culture, while, in the mean time, it has founded three nationalities which stand at the head of the list of nations. Each year adds to their wealth, extends their boundaries, spreads still farther their influence, and still increases their already unequalled power.

The fact is, that those nations among whom a pure form of Christianity has prevailed have been steadily prosperous; and their prosperity has continued through a period of time long enough in the era preceding the introduction of Christianity to have witnessed the rise and fall of many nations. It is true that Christian States, so called, have declined in national power, but it is no less true that their decay began with their departure from a pure form of Christianity. Let Buckle and others account for the present state of civilization as they please; but the impartial student of history must believe that Christianity has been the great motor of its progress.

The world is a vast Augean stable, and Christianity is the Hercules which is to cleanse it. The work seems long, very long, but it is nevertheless being accomplished. The pure life and God-sent teachings of the Christ must and will yet guide to the lost Eden the wandering feet of men.

The summer vacation had come and gone. The young men whose histories we are following were again at Athens. Changeful September passed, and gave place to golden-hued October.

In this month there occurred in Athens one of those religious movements which, coming as the wind, arrests the attention of a community, and turns it, for a time, at least, from the outward to the inner life. Men differ much in their opinions of these religious awakenings, and some, perhaps, will scoff at them to the end of time. But the fact remains that at such seasons men, and all classes of men, do turn away from the immoralities and defilements of their old lives to walk ever afterwards in new and clean ways.

About one week after this meeting had commenced, Ned Winter said to Paul, as they were leaving their boarding-house together,—

“Come, Paul, let us go to Peterson’s for a game of billiards.”

“No; I will not play at Peterson’s any more,” answered

Paul. "If you can find a table not connected with a bar-room, I will play with you, Ned, but not to-night."

Alec Moran went with Ned to the billiard-room. Paul and Julian walked on together until they met Macdermot on his way to church. Paul joined the latter, and Julian went on alone.

"Thus it will soon be," mused Julian, as he walked the quiet street that led to the more quiet fields beyond. "Together have we walked from infancy; we have played the same games, have read the same books, and have loved the same objects. But the time is coming, and is near at hand, when our paths separate. He will go the way father and mother are going, and, after a while, Bertha and Hattie; and then I—I will be alone. It must be so; I can never believe as they do. And why is this?—why cannot I, as they do, accept, without questioning it, the faith which has been handed down from generation to generation? Is it because there is a principle in my mind which leads it to doubt the miraculous, and things not clearly discerned? Or is it because I have been made blind and deaf, lest seeing I might perceive, and lest hearing I might understand? In either case I am not responsible. They ask me to believe that God, who has created all things, has created a hell, a place of punishment for those of his creatures who rebel against his law; and that this hell is no reformatory school, the only object of its creation being the infliction of punishment. Oh, this wide and bottomless pit, filled with miserable beings whose woes are never to end! Ye dwellers in the lake of fire, why did ye raise your puny arms against Him who sits upon the throne of the universe? Ye were but as teething babes lying at the feet of some Samson. Ye could not hurt him, it is true, could not take from him aught of his great strength, yet ye were fretful babes, powerless, but fretful, and so ye have been thrown into the lake, and must stay there. Ye were powerless at first, and are powerless still, but ye must stay there! How inconsistent is the character of this God with the character of Him whom they call the Son of God, and who, it is alleged, died upon the cross that he might save man! I must believe in them both, or, what is far easier for me, I must believe in neither. And yet, there must be truth somewhere—yes, somewhere."

Julian by this time was passing the cottage of old Chaffey

Phipps. A man crossed the road just ahead of him and entered her gate. Julian thought that he recognized in the man the almost forgotten hermit of Bluestone Spring. He was sure of it when he heard, as he passed by, a voice at the door, saying,—

“Ho, thou Witch of Endor! a wayfaring man seeks counsel at thy shrine.”

After some parleying, Julian heard the door open and the man enter the house. He walked on, wondering what business this strange man could have with old Chaffey Phipps. He had hitherto regarded her as harmless, but she was certainly, he thought, in suspicious company to-night. But the thoughts which this circumstance had displaced soon returned. He walked on through the silent fields until the shades of night had fallen around him, and the stars had studded thick the calm and moonless canopy above him.

Stopping at length beside a large stone which lay in the open fields, he leaned against it, and looked up at the innumerable suns and worlds glittering in the dark vault above.

“Shelley was wrong,” he muttered; “there is a God. This innumerable host of heaven, with ten millions more invisible, each moving with exact precision in its place, came not by chance, nor yet are ruled by chance. An Omnipotent Being made them; a wise Being rules them. We look upon our own world and ask, Why was it made? The answer comes clearly: For man’s abode. He then made man—and for what? Made him a sentient, an intelligent being, with an indestructible soul—and for what? Because it pleased Him. Yes; it pleased Him. But what was his intention towards man—was it *malevolent* or *benevolent*? If the former, then dogmatic theology is true, for it consigns the great bulk of the human family to perdition; but if his intentions were benevolent, as the dogmatists affirm, then—where, oh, where is truth?”

Such were the musings of the young man as he walked the lonely fields beneath the starlit sky. It was late when he thought of returning to his room. On the way back he met Paul at the same corner where they had separated a few hours before.

“Why, Paul, is this you?” he asked. “I thought you went to church.”

"So I did; but have been walking with Kennon since the meeting."

"Is Kennon interested?" asked Julian, after a pause.

"Yes; very much," answered Paul.

"I see no reason why you and Kennon should feel any particular interest in these meetings. The object of them is, I believe, to make men better?"

"Ah, Julian, you know not what you are saying. I tell you that I feel the need of stronger help than there is in my weak will to resist the temptations which constantly assail me."

They changed the subject, and, talking cheerily, walked on, arm in arm, to their room.

Having prepared their first morning's lesson, they read until twelve, when each retired to his couch,—Paul to quickly fall into an untroubled slumber, Julian to lie awake and think and reason and dream, and vainly try to banish thought, to stop the action of his mind, and shut out the pictures that would intrude upon his sight. He fell asleep at last to dream that he and Paul were going a far journey together. That coming to where the road divided, they parted company; himself taking the left hand, while Paul took the right. Long, lonely, and rough the road seemed to the dreamer. At length, ere he was aware of it, he had left the road, and was mounting a steep and rocky ascent. With steps slow and painful he gained the summit, when he stood within another road stretching far before him. He saw beside him a shadowy form—it was Paul's. Paul smiled upon his brother, took him by the hand, and then they together walked, through a dim twilight, the ever-lengthening highway.

Two more weeks passed. Julian Marable and Ned Winter were playing billiards at Peterson's. At the close of a game, about eleven o'clock at night, Ned said,—

"Come, Julian, I will introduce you to an old acquaintance. Follow me."

He then led the way through a dark passage on one side of the billiard-room, at the end of which was a flight of steps. Ascending this, they stopped before a door near the stairs' head. Ned pressed a hidden spring in the door, when it was soon after opened by a gray-headed negro, who, recognizing Ned, at once invited them in. Passing through a dimly-lighted hall they entered a room where, seated around a table,

were four men engaged in a game of euchre. In an adjoining room could be seen, through the wide folding-doors which served as a partition between the two apartments, and which were now open, a larger table, behind which sat a man dealing cards from a small metallic box, and around which eight or ten men were grouped.

In one of the four men who were playing euchre, Julian recognized the man he had met more than four years before at Bluestone Spring. Brenham, recognizing the young men as soon as they entered, leaned back in his chair, and half closing his eyes, began to sing, in a low tone, the old hymn beginning, "When I can read my title clear." At the conclusion of the first stanza he stopped, and motioning to the chairs, which the negro had already placed for them, bid them be seated.

"Ah, Julian," he said, "you behold the whilom pious eremite of the spring, like poor Tray, fallen into bad company. He must needs be seeking innocent recreation, and lo! he finds himself ensnared in the pit of the fowler. That is our trick, Sparks," he said, addressing his partner, "and the next one, too, for here is the right bower. Come, wake up, Shuck, thou sable son of Erebus, we want something wherewith to moisten our dry fauces. What will you have, young gentlemen? Sherry? Very good. Two glasses of sherry, Shuck, and four of cognac."

From a marble-top sideboard, on which stood a row of glittering decanters, the negro Shuck brought, on a waiter, the six glasses called for. When they had been returned empty to the waiter the playing was resumed. Brenham talked on as before, yet with his mind evidently intent upon the game.

"Temperance, gentlemen," he said, smacking his lips after the disappearance of the brandy, "temperance is a good thing. I think next summer I will make a lecturing tour through the West, and temperance shall be my theme. Never again in Georgia shall I discourse to a rural population on the evils of dram-drinking. I tried that once in one of the upper counties, and am satisfied with my effort. It occurred when the temperance movement first began. A friend offered to bet a hundred dollars that no man could make a temperance speech at Wolfpen, in Rabun County, and escape a ducking in the horse-pond for his rashness. I took the bet, and sent up an appoint-

ment, which, accompanied by my friend, I followed in a week. The notice which had preceded me simply stated that I would address the citizens of the Wolfpen district on the momentous questions of the day. It was a rude, mountainous district to which we went, whose people, for the most part, as I learned afterward, were religiously opposed to Sunday-schools, missions, and the temperance reform. I found quite a number of these rough mountaineers awaiting my arrival under the brush arbor where I was to hold forth. Without loss of time I mounted the stand, and pitched in *medias res*. With some rhetorical flourishes I described what should be the condition of society. My auditors, I thought, had a dim comprehension of this part of my discourse; but when I came to describe how the peace, joy, and beauty of the world were marred by the rum-fiend, and just when I thought I had mounted to the highest pitch of eloquence and was holding my audience spell-bound, I was not a little startled when a tall old fellow, with leathery face and hooked nose, and whose homespun jacket caught him just below the hips, rose, and throwing up his hand impatiently, called out, 'Hold on thar, stranger!' I thought it best to 'hold on.' The old fellow continued, looking around upon the other wool-hats, 'I say, ain't it 'bout time we put a stop to this 'ere foolishness?' 'Ye're right, Squire,' said another, a short, thick man, who spoke in a quick, sharp tone; 'ye're right; he's sich an advocate for cold water I move we make him 'quainted with the hoss-pond.' At this my friend, starting up, would have beat a hasty retreat to where our horses were tied in the bushes; but the smile which I gave to his simplicity arrested his steps. As my indignant auditors were rushing towards me, I quietly drew from a coat pocket a flask filled with the best of old Bourbon. I unstoppered it and held it in readiness. The last speaker was the first to reach me. I thrust the bottle under his nose, saying, 'Pretty good stuff that—try it.' He paused, smelled at it, took the bottle, and did try it. The first speaker, in the mean time, had come up and was about to take hold of me on the other side. I had another flask ready for him; when he, too, paused to smell at it, I knew that the crisis was passed. While these two bottles were passing among the men I drew forth a third, and handed it to a cadaverous-looking old woman who sat on a front seat. Seizing it eagerly, she about half emptied it before

withdrawing it from her thin lips. Some time after, as my companion and I rode away, we saw the short man slapping his thighs with his hands and beating the ground with one foot, to the time of which the long man was trying to dance. Neither of us claimed the wager, for, though I escaped the pond, I did not finish my speech. But we can claim what's up on this game, Sparks, for this trick puts us out." Saying which he pushed two of the bills lying upon the table to his partner, while he pocketed the other two.

The playing at both tables ceased for a while, and all going into a side room, sat down to a supper consisting of broiled partridges, toasted bread, butter, coffee, and celery. After supper sherry was handed around. At one o'clock, Julian and Ned, both half intoxicated, sat down with others at the faro-table. Ned seemed perfectly at home, as if he had been a habitué of such a place all his life; every half-hour he would call for something to drink. Frequent oaths, sometimes loud and impatient, but more often low and bitter, were heard around the table. They came often from Ned Winter, and sometimes from Julian Marable.

Ah, Julian; restless, doubting, ambitious Julian, you were wandering far away from Paul on that night, far away from your father, from your gentle mother, from your lovely sisters. But the wanderer was not forgotten. As a brother laid himself upon his couch to sleep he looked at the empty chair, at the other untouched couch, listened awhile for the coming footsteps, and then, ere he fell asleep, murmured, "God keep my brother." Far away in the old homestead a loving mother's last prayer that night was for her two absent boys. And in another room of that same distant homestead the gray-haired father sat, burning the midnight lamp. He had vainly tried to read—his thoughts were with his absent sons. He had heard that very day good news of Paul; he was to be baptized the next Sunday. The letter made no mention of Julian. The father knew well the disposition of this son, and he had heard something, too, of his irregular habits, which had increased the uneasiness he already felt about him. From his heart that night a deep and tender yearning went out towards his first-born. He turned down the lamp and pushed his book aside; then, bowing his head upon his hands, he prayed unto his God that He would yet guide aright his wandering son. Ah,

erring Julian Marable, how well for you that night that the yearning cry of your father's heart to God for you outsped the tardier flight of the accusing angel!

On the next Sunday evening Julian was one of a large crowd that filled one of the churches in the city. He sat with a gloomy expression on his face. The sermon was an impressive one, but it bore no meaning to his heedless ears—his thoughts, prompted by a tender conscience, were busy with the recent past. His remorse, however, was not so much that he had so far forgotten the teachings of his childhood, the loving admonitions of his mother, and the sterner counsels of his father as to drink, and swear, and gamble, but that he had drunk too much. The thought that he had so far forgotten his manhood as to become intoxicated, that he had so far debased his intellect as to approach the brute creation, was most galling to his pride. There was some fear, too, to increase the darkness of the cloud that was upon him. He did not wish to wholly lose the respect of his teachers and of the better class of his fellow-students; beside this, there was a fear of expulsion or suspension from college. For these reasons, that blotted and stained page in his young life's history detailing the experiences of the preceding Friday night he would, if he could, have torn out and hidden away forever from the sight of his fellow-men.

The sermon, nor the people, nor the music had any attraction for Julian that Sunday night. But there was that at the conclusion of the services which did attract and fix his hitherto listless eyes. It was the baptism of Paul. He and Kennon, the last of twenty who were baptized that evening, together walked down into the baptismal font. The eyes of all in that large audience were turned with more than ordinary interest upon the tranquil faces of the two young men, whom they knew to be rivals, as they descended, hand in hand, into the clear and glittering wave. But Julian's gaze was fixed upon the face of his brother, and his thoughts, with lightning speed, recurred to a thousand scenes of their early boyhood. Like one entranced he sat, gazing upon the scene. At its conclusion the choir sang an anthem of praise, during which the congregation slowly dispersed; but Julian moved not until the last notes of the organ had died away, and the lamps had begun to be extinguished.

CHAPTER XV.

TRAVIS SQUARE.

IN the city of Augusta, and near to the Savannah River, was Travis Square, the residence of Horace Winter. The house, situated near the centre of this square, and in the midst of a fine grove of water oaks, was large and modern in its architecture. Its various halls and rooms were beautifully adorned and richly furnished. A single glance either at the house and its surroundings, or at the costly furniture and embellishments within, would convince the beholder that no expense had been originally spared in making the place attractive.

It was very quiet now. No merry children were ever seen playing beneath the fine old oaks in front, nor did the silent walls of the house ever resound with their childish cries or laughter. Some flowers, growing in boxes and arranged beneath the trees, relieved the place of that sombre aspect which, without them, must have settled about it.

Horace Winter was past middle life. When younger, and in health, he had been a fine-looking and portly man. But for several years he had been the victim of a disease which had gradually reduced his strength, and made him, at fifty, a wrinkled and gray-haired man. He wore no beard except a moustache, which he wore short, and which, like his hair, was gray. The face was not prepossessing now, though it might have once been so; it had in it a hard and cold expression, while its inflexible character gave little expectation that the hard and cold heart which gave it its expression would ever be thawed.

Mrs. Ruth Winter, about ten years younger than her husband, notwithstanding she had endured much suffering, both physical and mental, still seemed in the prime of life. About her subdued face there was a quiet light which spoke of tranquillity. It had once been a face of rare beauty; it was still a lovely one.

The most of her trouble had come during the first half of her married life. Her first two children, after living long enough to so endear themselves to her by their infantile arts as to fill her soul, were taken from her by death. Five or six years passed, and her third child, a daughter, was born. Upon her darling Annabel she lavished the wealth of her love only to lose her at the end of a year. The circumstances under which she was lost, pointing as they did to the merciless waves of the river, proved a shock to her nature almost greater than it could bear. Her life would have gone out beneath it had it not been for the faint hope which she cherished for some months that her child had not been drowned, but would be found and restored to her. For several years after the disappearance of Annabel, the afflicted mother showed no interest in the busy world around her, and was seemingly wholly indifferent whether she lived or died. At this time she appeared like some delicate flower, that any wind, however rude, might break from its brittle stem. During these years she seemed like one who was constantly expecting the arrival of some one. Ah, how long and weary was her waiting!

She had had another trial to endure besides the loss of her children. She had seen its shadow coming while yet the years of her married life were few. Oh, with what a benumbing feeling about her heart she first recognized the fact that the love of her husband had turned, or was turning, to indifference! Her first-born was then with her; to it she turned and found—not consolation, but a chain to bind her still to life. But when later her children were all taken from her, then indeed was she left alone and desolate.

But she was not forsaken. There came a time when the cloud was lifted from her soul, and the veil removed from her eyes, and she saw the way in which she was henceforth to walk. She then saw Duty rise in clearest outlines, and beckon her onward; she followed its beck with a gentle and patient spirit.

Again she mingled with the world, but not as heretofore. Once more she became a regular attendant at the house of God—that house from which her troubles had for a long time banished her, only that she might one day be brought back to lay genuine service upon its altar. She next took a class in the Sunday-school connected with her church. It was a class of little girls, of about the age that her own little Annabel would

have been had she lived. As she tried to teach these little girls something of the duties of their young lives, her own became clearer; and as she tried to render their young hearts more susceptible to whatever is true and good and beautiful, she found that the exercise opened her own heart, and filled it with such a quiet love, such pure aspirations, and such images of beauty as she had hitherto never known. She then became connected with a benevolent society, composed, for the most part, of the lady members of her own church, and the object of which was to extend aid to the poor—first to their own poor, and then to as many others as their means would enable them to help. Mrs. Winter became neither a noisy nor a leading member in this society, yet she was not the less interested in seeing it accomplish its ends. Her benefactions to the poor, however, were not confined to her contributions to this Dorcas Society, but she came to be well known among the poor of her neighborhood, and not only known, but loved, for her many acts of kindness. Is it any wonder that flowers began to bloom again along this lonely woman's life-path? Is it any wonder that strength returned to her limbs, the flush of health to her cheeks, and brightness to her eyes? In the discharge of these various duties did she neglect those of her household? No. As a general rule, those who do the most do the best work. And again, those who do good to others are apt to do good to themselves and their families. And again—and this is laid down with great confidence, as a general rule, to which there are no exceptions—those who will help the poor in other (heathen if you please) lands, will help the poor in their own land. Our sympathies naturally turn to our homes, but if we keep them confined there they become dwarfed, and often, at last, dry up. On the other hand, if we let them flow into new channels the fountain-head will be kept ever pure and fresh, and the stream will continue to grow in depth and volume until the most remote shores are reached and gladdened by its health-bearing wave.

Horace Winter had never been so well cared for in his life as he was after the change in his wife, which led her from the grave of her sorrows to mingle again in the world, with a new interest in its scenes and its people. The rich banker, since the coming on of that disease which was gradually wasting him, spent the most of his evenings at home. At his meals

he always found prepared some delicacy for which he had at some previous time expressed a partiality, or some light regimen made palatable by pleasant condiments which the thoughtful wife supposed suited to his condition. After tea he always found his cushioned arm-chair drawn beside the table, on which lay his evening paper, and over which was shed the soft light of a shaded lamp. His wrapper and slippers were always at hand, and a cushioned ottoman for his feet to rest on.

Horace Winter lacked for nothing that was necessary to his personal comfort which the forethought of his wife could provide; but there was a drought in his soul, and she knew not how to bring the shower into it; she could only hope and wait for an opportunity. In the mean time she watched his moods, never talking when he seemed indisposed to talk, and never letting him hear her speak in other than a quiet and gentle tone.

One evening, about a week after the events mentioned in the last chapter occurred, and after the hour of tea, sat Horace Winter and his wife in their comfortable parlor; he was engaged with his paper, and she in making some fancy article for a charity fair to be held, in a few days, by the church to which she belonged.

Sitting thus, there was an unexpected ring of the door-bell. Presently after the servant stood in the doorway to announce the name of the visitor, but ere it was called, the audacious visitor, brushing past the servant, entered the room, and, with his own self-confidence, stood before his astonished uncle and aunt.

Horace Winter had seen very little of this nephew; he had seen him once, while he was on a visit to Rome several years before, and once since, when Ned made a short visit to Augusta. Though he had reached that condition when it was not probable that he would form any very decided predilection for any one, yet, from what he had seen of Ned, he was inclined to like him. As soon as the first greetings were over, and Ned was seated, the uncle asked,—

“And what brings you from Athens at this time?”

“Ah, sir,” replied Ned, assuming a serious tone, “thereby hangs a tale. An unfortunate chain of events has served to sever my connection with that distinguished institution.”

"Ah, you will not return to Athens?" asked Mrs. Winter, in surprise.

"The severance is final, aunt, I am forced to conclude," answered Ned, in a tone of regret.

"Is it expulsion, Ned?" bluntly asked the uncle.

"Hah, that is putting it rather pointedly, to say the least of it. I had hardly thought of it in that light. I suppose you may call it involuntary banishment."

"And this 'chain of events' which led to it?" still questioned Horace Winter.

"Are such as I, their innocent victim, can afford to mention," continued Ned. "A few mornings since I received a polite invitation, brought by the college janitor, an old negro named Shadrach, to wait on the Chancellor in his room. Having a due sense of the honor conferred upon me by said invitation, I lost no time in making my appearance before the high functionary who had extended it. But imagine my surprise when, instead of the encomiums which a consciousness of meritorious conduct had led me, despite my modesty, to expect, I heard a long list of charges preferred against me, and the further astounding facts that, in a trial which had occurred the day before, in the high chancery of the university, these charges had all been substantiated, that sentence had been passed upon me, and nothing now remained to be done but for me to receive the verdict of the court, which was that my further attendance at the University of Georgia was deemed by the faculty to be no longer necessary, or, in fact, desirable."

A grim smile moved slightly the corners of the uncle's gray moustache as the young man concluded.

"What were the charges?" he asked.

"There were several charges, and specifications under each charge. I was actually charged with offences against the order of the college which I did not even know had been committed. I was so unfortunate, however, as to have been seen, so it was said, near the scenes of these disturbances. I was charged also with drunkenness, when the fact is, I never, during my connection with the college, touched anything stronger than water. So well known was my predilection for the temperance cause, having on several occasions spoken publicly in its favor, that I was looked upon with an evil eye by every

barkeeper in the place. My misfortune lay in having a class-mate, who, with a devout mien, had an innate love of midnight adventure only equalled by his passion, likewise innate, for ardent spirits. I never saw his match. At different times, with pious exhortations, I warned him of what he might expect. But alas for all human expectations! it was *I* who should have received warning—warning to shun his company. His room was next door to mine, and often, when coming in late and befuddled, as he usually was by his Bacchic potations, he would mistake my room and couch for his own. He had a habit, too, of putting on my hat, and sometimes my coat, through mistake he always affirmed, when setting out on his nocturnal perambulations. If he came in at two o'clock in the morning; bearing as a trophy the clapper of the college bell, he was certain to mistake my room for his own. Having deposited the clapper beneath my bed, so silently as not to disturb my innocent slumbers, he would then retire to his own room—having discovered his mistake by that time, no doubt, yet perversely forgetting to remove the obnoxious trophy. Of course the janitor found the clapper under Mas'r Ned's bed. Again, I would be aroused some morning by the crowing of the Chancellor's cock, or somebody else's, standing in my open window, having been brought to my room by the same hands which had brought the bell's clapper. And again, if, in a more dare-devil mood than usual, this night-bird, as he reeled homeward, had hurled several large stones against either the window or the front door of the tutor's apartment, by some strange fatuity he came directly to my room. Thus you see how I am the victim of circumstances."

"But did you make no defence?" asked his aunt.

"I hardly knew what to say, but thinking that I must say something, and yet not having my wits about me altogether, I straightened up and commenced, '*Quamdiu, Catilina, nostram patientiam,*' etc. The old gentleman was quite astounded when I began, for he fell back a step or two and picked up his cane, as if fearing an attack. But recovering himself, he rang the bell for the janitor, who, on his arrival, was ordered to show me the door. On the approach of that functionary, dropping Cicero's harangue against Catiline as not altogether appropriate, I struck off into the defiant speech of the latter on hearing that he was banished. The gray-haired old janitor

stopped and let his mouth fall open in his astonishment, as I stepped quickly in front of him, threw out one arm, and throwing all the scorn in my face and tone that I could, thus began: 'Banished from Athens! and what's banished but set free from daily contact of the things I loathe?' The old man fell back before me, while I followed him up, still pouring forth the fiery invective, and all the time throwing out my hands in threatening proximity to his head. In his retreat he at length fell backwards over a bench, when I thought it a good opportunity to make my own retreat. This I did in good order."

Again the grim smile, more decided than before, moved the gray moustache of the valetudinarian. The aunt, too, smiled; she would have laughed outright had it not been about so serious a matter. She was beginning to suspect that there were, at least, two sides to Ned's character. She said, questioningly,—

"But that was a very strange defence to make, Ned."

"So it was," he assented; "but you see it was done on the spur of the moment. A moment's reflection, when I came out, convinced me of the utter futility of attempting any defence at all. I therefore bowed to the decree which had gone forth against me, yet conscious of its injustice, knowing as I did how I was the victim of—ah—of circumstances."

"You find that a convenient word, it seems," remarked his uncle, with dry irony.

"Well, yes, sir; I do find it quite convenient, I must admit, under the present—*circumstances*."

"Who was the classmate, Ned, whose evil conduct brought this trouble upon you?" asked Mrs. Winter.

"It doesn't sound well to be telling tales out of school, but it will be no breach of honor to name him here. His name is Julian Marable."

"Julian Marable!" repeated the woman, in surprise.

"Hah—a son of Philip Marable?" asked the man at the same time, and looking to Ned for an answer.

"He is—a son of that pattern of orthodoxy and piety, Mr. Philip Marable."

"I have heard that he was pious; and the young man, I suppose, does honor to his raising?" said Mr. Winter, contemptuously.

"We don't know yet what he is to become," his wife said, very quietly.

"No, we do not," assented Ned. "He is an atheist now, and aspires to be one day a leader in the unbelieving world. But his dissipated habits would thwart his ambition, even if an incapable mind did not."

"The prayers of his father may yet prevail; we may yet see him turn from his present evil courses and become, like his father, a truly good man."

"A truly good man, indeed!" sneered Horace Winter. "What do you know of Philip Marable now? He was truly good, I suppose, when you knew him,—when he was foolish enough to admire——"

He checked the ungenerous and ungentlemanly speech, but not before indignant blood had mantled the face of his wife. Ned marked the words, as well as the flush they brought to his aunt's face, but did not understand them. Horace Winter looked at that moment as though he loathed everything, himself included. In a weary tone he asked for wine, and then added,—

"Perhaps Ned, too, will have a glass?"

"Yes, uncle," answered Ned, with something like a sigh to indicate weariness. "I am a teetotaller on general principles, but to-night I feel as if a glass of wine would set me straight."

Two glasses were brought and drained, after which the parties separated for the night.

Ned remained a couple of days in Augusta. Before he left his shrewdness enabled him to discover that he need expect nothing from Horace Winter on the score of kinship. The latter, it was very evident, was disposed to ignore entirely the relationship between them. Yet Ned was quite sure that he had pleased his uncle; which fact encouraged him to still pursue the plan he had formed, at the instigation of George Brenham, by which he hoped to ultimately come into possession of a large part, if not the whole, of his uncle's wealth.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE CEMETERY—JULIAN PURSUED.

WHEN Ned Winter's expulsion became known, more than one friend said to Julian Marable, "Be careful if you do not wish to follow Winter." He heeded the warnings so far as to quit frequenting bar-rooms for the remainder of his college life. He also gave more attention to his text-books.

The day came at length when the honors were decided: the first was awarded to Paul Marable and the second to Kennon Macdermot. At the same time were announced the names of those, ten in number, who had obtained speakers' places. Julian Marable's name was one of the ten.

On Saturday preceding commencement the Marable family arrived in Athens.

Bertha, now in her fifteenth year, was just budding into a lovely young woman. Her figure was trim and graceful, and her fair, fresh face wore an animated expression, revealing a keen interest in life and the events passing around her. Unimpassioned was the soul of the young man who could look into her clear blue eyes and not feel his heart beat faster for the glance.

It is impossible to possess beauty and not be conscious of it. Bertha was no exception to this rule. She could not always avoid seeing the ardent glances cast at her by the other sex, and she knew, too, how to interpret them. This consciousness, no doubt, made richer the glow upon her cheeks, not yet used to the glare of the world,—neither its glare nor its stare.

On Sunday afternoon Kennon Macdermot called at the house where Mr. Marable and his family were guests. He went at the invitation of Paul, and by him was introduced to the different members of the family.

Towards the hour of sunset, on the following day, Paul and Bertha were walking down one of the broad avenues of the

cemetery. They were followed at some distance by Julian, with his mother and Hattie. Paul presently descried Kennon Macdermot, in company with a gentleman, coming towards them. As they came near, Paul recognized the interesting stranger whose seat he had shared during his first journey to Athens. A second glance at him now was sufficient to reveal the fact that he was Kennon's father. As soon as they came up, Kennon introduced his father to Paul and his sister. Mr. Morton Macdermot, looking still almost as youthful as his son, possessed all that son's enthusiasm. Shaking Paul heartily by the hand, he said,—

"I knew that we would meet again, my young chevalier. When Kennon would come home and tell me of his friend Paul Marable, I listened with interest, though I said nothing of my once having met him,—I had a reason for not mentioning it. Yes, Miss Bertha, I met your brother three years ago, and after travelling with him from Kingston to Atlanta, and learning where he was going, and what class he would enter, I thought then that Kennon must look well to his laurels."

"It would have been pleasant for me to have known," replied Paul, "that the stranger who interested me so much that day and the father of my friend were the same."

"Paul," said Kennon, "as you and father seem to be old friends, and if Miss Bertha will trust herself to my guidance, we will leave you to talk over old times. I will see her safely home in due time."

"I would like to bar that arrangement," said Mr. Macdermot, looking after the retreating pair, "but I am too late. Paul—you will permit an old classmate and friend of your father to call you by your Christian name—Paul, your sister is a very lovely girl."

He said this musingly, as his eye followed the two walking down the avenue. It seemed to Paul to be an afterthought. He was relieved from the necessity of replying to it by the approach of Julian with his mother and Hattie. Paul at once introduced Mr. Macdermot to his mother.

"I knew Mr. Marable many years ago," said the gentleman; "we were classmates. I am glad to meet you, and to thus meet the children of my old friend, your husband."

After which he shook hands with Julian and Hattie. As

he looked into the face of the latter, there was something there which caught and fixed his attention. Julian and his mother both observed the look of close scrutiny which he gave to her face for a few moments. During the short conversation which then followed between him and Mrs. Marable, Julian noticed, and with some uneasiness, that his eyes constantly wandered to Hattie's face, and with the same look of puzzled inquiry in them.

Presently Mr. Marable was seen coming towards them. While he was yet some distance off, Mr. Macdermot abruptly left the little group and went to meet him. The two men were seen to shake hands, and then silently to turn into an obscure and unfrequented way which led at right angles from the central avenue.

After a while Paul and his mother sat down on a rustic seat near by, while Julian and Hattie wandered away together.

In a distant part of the grounds, and close to a well-shaded spring, sat Kennon and Bertha. They had been seated there about a half-hour when there suddenly appeared before them a tall, thin woman, dressed in black. It was old Chaffey Phipps.

Bertha gave a slight start at the strange apparition.

"There's na need wishing ye a pleasant eve, friend Macdermot," said the old woman, turning her restless eyes from one to the other of her auditors, "for ye ha'e that a'ready. But ye maun forgi'e me for interrupting ye lang enough to take a look at this young lady; Chaffey Phipps has an e'e for what is bonnie, if she is auld. And she will pardon me, too, for I see that she is a Marable."

"A Marable? How do you know that, friend Chaffey?" asked the young man.

"Yes, she is a Marable, yet like neither of her brothers," continued old Chaffey, as if speaking to herself, and using pure English. "Twenty-five years ago I saw her mother in this same place, and looking much as she does now. How do I know her?" she asked, raising her voice and turning towards Kennon, "ha, I know her well."

"But I never saw you before," said Bertha. "How then do you know me?"

Old Chaffey seldom gave a direct answer to a question.

"I ha'e lived in this place a lang time," she said, "and I've led a lonely life, as ye weel ken, Master Kennon. In a' these

years old Chaffey has had few friends. It's na complaint I'm making, for my life has been what I've made it. Now and then some one wad stop to speak a civil word, and now and then wad come a mouthfu' from a neighbor's board,—but there is that that's more wanted at times than meat and drink."

"Have you no relatives?" asked Bertha.

"No friend came nigh,—came to sit beside my hearthstone, and make me feel that in a' this great world I was na one by mysel'. Kinsfolk, do you speak of? There was one,—a sister's bairn. I raised her. She married, went awa', then died. She was the last. The years wad come and gang, and little cared I whether they stayed or went. They brought to me eno' to eat and to wear; what more could I want? What more? Her life is auld and withered; what more? There came a time at last, when I saw within my doorway the shimmer of a golden head,—when I saw beside my hearthstone a cheerfu' beam o' sunlight that was na there before. He came, bringing light—and shall I not say hope?—into my withered life. Ah, now ye are looking on me with your mither's ain blue e'e; and the same look is in them, too, I've seen sa often in your brother's. Is it strange now that I should ken ye were a Marable?"

"I am not sure that I yet understand it," said Bertha, hardly knowing what to answer.

"Well, well—your brother Paul has told me many things—and some were things I cannot forget—and I have talked to him of things I never thought to speak of. So it was, Miss Bertha, your brothers are unlike, much unlike, and yet they *are* alike. Mr. Kennon, the young folks will miss old Chaffey's booth to-morrow. I have pulled it down,—my occupation's gone."

Saying which, she hurriedly went away.

As Julian walked on with Hattie, a better mood than usual seemed to grow upon him. Banishing the unpleasant thoughts which Mr. Macdermot's searching glances at Hattie had called up, he went forward with his child companion, seemingly unmindful of all around him. He let her do most of the talking. With her hat swinging in her hand, and her soft hair floating back from her fair young face, she seemed the impersonation of innocent, happy childhood. With eager interest she talked, now of some charming scene she had witnessed

since leaving home, and now of the lovely grounds through which they were passing. Now and then, too, she would stop to admire some flower blooming beside the way; and Julian would stop with her, and show an interest in it equal to her own. At length they left the central avenue, went along darkly-shaded walks that led by bubbling springs almost hidden in their covered recesses, until they came into a part of the grounds which, though not less beautiful than that they had passed through, was yet less frequented on account of its remoteness from the main entrance and the absence of walks regularly laid out.

Julian, sitting down on a rude bench which he found close to a hedge, took a cigar from his pocket and lit it.

"Oh, Julie, let us not stop here," said Hattie.

"Why not?"

"It is so out-of-the-way; we can't see anything or anybody."

"So much the better," replied Julian. "I am tired of seeing people."

"You may be, but I am not."

"You can't see anything? Those woods over there are very pretty, I am sure," said Julian, stretching his hands towards them as he spoke.

"Yes; but I will tire of that after a while."

"When we tire of that, why then—we can look at each other."

"Look at each other! To be sure we can; and when we tire of *that*?" she said, with an arch smile.

Julian did not reply at once; he was looking into her laughing eyes.

"By heavens! Hattie," he presently said, "I don't think I would ever tire of that."

"Oh, Julie, it is wrong to say such things. The Bible says swear not——"

"Don't preach to me, child," interrupted Julian, "I am not in the mood to listen to it now. Besides, I know what the Bible says."

Hattie was silent for a little while; then seeing a wild-flower growing not far off, she went to gather it. Coming back, she stood in front of Julian while trying to fix the flower in her hair. While thus engaged she said,—

"Tell me something of Miss Laura, Julie; I haven't heard you speak of her in a long time."

"I have nothing to tell you of her," replied he, carelessly.

"Nothing to tell me of *her*?—it's only because you won't!"

"There is nothing between Miss Laura and myself."

"Nothing? I thought you loved her. You used to talk to Bertha and me as if you did."

"That was only to please you and Bertha."

"But it never pleased me."

"It did not? I thought it did."

"No; I am glad that you do not love her."

"You? Why?"

"I don't know—hark! I hear voices on the other side of the hedge."

Julian did not reply, so there was silence between them for a few moments. The voices Hattie had heard also ceased. Presently they heard footsteps quite near to them beyond the hedge, and then the voices again, speaking in a low tone. The footsteps showed that there were two couples, one but a few feet behind the other. As they came opposite to where Julian and Hattie were seated, the latter could not but hear the words of the young lady who was speaking,—

"They say that he is very wicked, and an infidel."

"Of whom are you speaking, sister?" asked a second voice behind the first.

The answer came clear and distinct across the hedge:

"Mr. Julian Marable."

Julian started as he heard his own name thus familiarly called. He looked into the child's face, which, with an indignant flush on it, was turned towards his.

"Say it is untrue, Julie; that you are not wicked—not an infidel," said the child, earnestly.

"We will not mind what they said, Hattie," replied Julian, taking her by the hand. "It was an idle speech, and not worth remembering. Come; let us go back."

They began to retrace their steps, he holding her still by the hand. As they were passing through a deeply-shaded dingle, old Chaffey Phipps suddenly stood before them in the path.

"Hah, Master Julian," she said; "where awa' sa fast wi' this bonnie lass?"

"We are returning home, friend Chaffey," he answered, still moving on as though he would not stop.

"Hame, do you say? Whose hame; yours or hers?" said the old woman, keeping her position in front of them.

"I am taking this child, my sister, to where she is stopping—her present home, we may call it. The sun is about down, you see, and we must on."

"And what's your ain hame been to her, I would like to know, but a present hame?" rejoined Chaffey, raising her voice to a shrill pitch. "D'ye think she'll abide there a'ways? that her folks——"

"Stop, woman! I will hear no more!" interrupted Julian, with quick, sharp tones, and at the same time pushing by her with Hattie clinging to his left hand. The old woman stepped aside, and then stood still to watch them ascend the hill.

"Gang on, gang on," she presently muttered to herself, "to where ye dinna' ken. Gang on, gang on into the hidden years—and then, what then? They leave the path, and are climbing over the hill. 'Tis a longer way, but by it they'll meet no people. They stop upon the top. He still holds her tightly by the hand; and now, his other hand is pointing to the people below. Its motion is quick and nervous. I can almost see the flashing of his eyes as he speaks to her. He was surely stirred by something before I met him. And now they are moving away,—moving on down the hill, down into the shadows, into the world, into the years, and away from me. They are gone."

CHAPTER XVII.

LAST DAY AT ATHENS.

AT ten o'clock on Wednesday morning, a dense crowd had gathered in the spacious college chapel to hear the speeches of the graduating class. The exercises were opened with the usual Latin salutatory, by Kennon Macdermot; they were closed with the usual valedictory addresses, delivered by Paul Marable. These addresses have been spoken a long time, and there has been, necessarily from their character, more or less of similarity in them all. But Paul not only had an original way of handling an old subject, but spoke with so much grace, so much force, and with such tender pathos, that not only were his classmates and teachers deeply moved, but the whole audience bent forward in rapt attention, as their emotions stirred in sympathy with his melting eloquence. Paul Marable had come to be well known outside of Athens; the trustees of the university, who lived in different parts of the State, not only knew him, but had learned to respect him for his talents, and to love him for his virtues. On that day, as they sat upon the broad rostrum where Paul was speaking, they, too, by their leaning forms and fixed faces, testified to the moving power of the young man's words.

The different addresses, at length, were all made, but the speaker did not leave the rostrum. A new thought had come to him,—a noble impulse, to which he yielded. Turning to where his class was seated, and stretching out his hands towards them, he said,—

“A few more words to you, my classmates, ere we separate: words they will be of that uncertain contest in which we are all engaged,—the battle of life. We begin this contest, apparently, under the most auspicious omens; but let us not be deceived by the favoring circumstances of our beginning. Fight as valiantly as we may, the eternal foe to our peace and success will meet us at every step, and oftentimes force us to turn

aside through some dark and lowly pass, or across the bleak mountain-tops. Oh! my comrades, will you ever lower the points of your lances in token of submission? or will you, with heads erect and hearts undaunted, march forward to victory? To victory! I hear you shout. Yes, your ardent souls, now in the first flush of youthful strength, disdain the coward's cry, and shout, To victory! But stop! *Ye are but men!* Those strong right arms are, after all, but arms of flesh, and subject to decay; those proud intellects, upon which you lean, have in them the elements of weakness; and those hearts, now filled only with generous emotions, have in them—alas! that it is so—the germs of corruption. My brothers, ye cannot fight alone; the odds are against you. Where, then, is your help? But let us pause here and ask, Are you satisfied that you need help? With your minds stored with the learning of ages, and with the light of the nineteenth century blazing around you, are you sure that you need any help—any guidance? Oh, the fate of those who need no guidance—who are a light unto themselves! Are they not yet groping in some Cyclopean cave, bruising their heads against its rugged walls, and lacerating their feet as they tread its flinty floor? Are they not groping there in night, in uncertainty, in dread? Can they escape—can they pass by the moon-eyed Polyphemus, whose huge form is stretched across the cavern's single door? They grope there, now listening to the breathing of the sleeping giant, now startled by his fierce cries, and now hiding from the fearful glare of his single eye. But the torch of the Chief is lighted at length. Ho! ye prisoners of the cave, bring every one your torch, and kindle it at the torch of your Chief. Ho! ye prisoners of the cave, and stand around the sleeping monster that bars your way to liberty; hold high your torches; and now, with strong right hands, thrust their burning ends deep into the huge eye of your great enemy. Ay, hold them there, and press, and turn them there, until its light is forever quenched. Then, and only then,—yet bearing your torches with you,—may ye go forth as conquerors into the glorious light and liberty of a new world."

Such were the concluding words of the young speaker to his classmates. Ah! Paul, who could doubt, listening to your voice, and looking into your earnest eyes, the genuineness of the words that fell that day from your lips? And who could

fail to see, by the light of the torch you held up in your free hands, a glimpse of that higher world to which you pointed and urged your late companions?

Late in the afternoon of that day Julian Marable was walking with a young lady in Athens's single park. This park, situated in the edge of the town, was large and well kept. In one part of it was a botanical garden, in which, with all native plants, many exotics were cultivated.

Julian's companion was a young lady from Augusta, Miss Cora McNair. This young lady had attended several commencements at Athens; and, being very pretty and vivacious, she had attracted much attention, and, in fact, had come to be regarded as quite the belle of the occasion. That afternoon Julian had attended her to the chapel to hear the concluding exercises of the commencement. After leaving the chapel, following the example of many others, they went to walk in the park.

After wandering through the park they entered the botanical garden. Along the gravelled walks and terraces of the latter they continued to ramble for some time, admiring the beauty of the many and rare flowers which filled its parterres. At length they entered a small grove of tropical trees, near the centre of which they found a bright, cold spring. The place was gloomy, yet enchanting in its gloom. They lingered for a few minutes at the spring, then left it to sit down on a bench which they found near the edge of the grove.

They had been seated there but a short time, when they saw the tall form of old Chaffey Phipps entering the grove from the opposite side. She stopped at the spring long enough to drink of its cool waters, and then went on towards the spot where they were seated.

"Here comes your Athenian Pythia," said Miss Cora. "I would like so much to hear a fortune told in this wild place. Do get her to tell yours, Mr. Marable."

"I will ask her to tell yours, Miss Cora," replied Julian.

"No; I already know mine: she told it a year ago. Let us hear *yours*; I am sure it will be interesting."

This the young lady said in a low tone, not intending it to be heard by the one approaching. She was therefore a little surprised to hear old Chaffey say, as she came up,—

"Ay, Miss Cora McNair, it could be made interesting, na doubt; but, granting it could be truly told, it might be that fu' of trouble neither he nor his friends would like to hear it."

"Oh, I hope not, friend Chaffey," replied the young lady. "Of course he must have some trouble; all of us are to expect that, you know. But you can make him surmount all difficulties, and come out bravely ahead at last."

"Nor I nor any one else can make him surmount the difficulties that lie in *his* way; they are too mountain-like."

"You only excite my curiosity to know something of those stupendous difficulties," persisted the young lady.

Julian was himself getting to be interested, having, as he did, a high opinion of the old woman's discernment of character. He was, therefore, thinking how best to second his companion's request, when he saw, passing along a terrace which ran close to the edge of the grove, his father, mother, and Hattie. The latter discovered her brother, as she passed a short flight of steps leading from the terrace to the grove. Stepping quickly down these, she ran to Julian, and offered him a small cluster of flowers which she bore in her hand. He took them silently, with only an inclination of the head. No; that was not all, for the child saw the pleased look that came into his eye, and went away as well satisfied as if he had spoken.

"Your sister, I suppose?" said Cora, as soon as Hattie had passed out of hearing. "How beautiful!—and how sweet in her to stop and give you those flowers!"

Julian did not reply at once, for his eyes were still following Hattie. When she passed from sight he turned to look at the flowers in his hand.

"It is the double-flowering almond," he said. "Can you tell me what it says, Miss Cora?"

"It says to you, *Do not doubt.*"

"Then it speaks what he will *na* heed," said old Chaffey, turning, as she spoke, to leave.

"Oh, don't leave us yet!" exclaimed Cora. "I want so much to hear Mr. Marable's fortune."

"And I second Miss Cora's request, friend Chaffey," put in Julian. "I know that you think of deserting Apollo's shrine, but before you do, turn upon me your prophetic eyes, and let us know what we shall know."

The old woman stood thinking silently for a while, as if there was something she would like to say, yet which, for some reason, she hesitated to say. Then turning suddenly, and fixing her black eyes full upon Julian, she said, in tones more solemn than she usually employed on similar occasions,—

“Ye both want to hear something which ye both have no mind to believe. But I will tell you that, Julian Marable, which, if you will not believe, you may at least remember. You, like the rest of mortals, would be happy, but there is that within your heart which will prove a hill of difficulty in your way to happiness never to be surmounted—it is doubt.”

Then turning aside her gaze, and sinking her voice, she thus continued, in a somewhat rhythmical monotone:

“In the depths of the years that are passed, Julian Marable, I knew
That father of yours; he was young then, and haughty, and few
Did he care, so it seemed, to enroll as his friends;
Not yet had he learned life's best uses and ends.
How he came these to learn, I need not now tell;
'Tis enough that he knows them, and knows them full well.
A moment ago and I saw him pass there;
The frosts of the years have whitened his hair,
But the light in his soul through his eyes shines out,
And I read in them peace, not the unrest of doubt.

“And back in those years, and your mother I knew—
A girl of sixteen; and her clear eyes of blue
Spake always of purity, beauty, and truth.
She, too, has just passed,—no longer in youth,
But the mantle of faith enwraps her about,
And forever excludes the shadows of doubt.

“You're alone, Julian Marable, for nor father nor mother
Shares with you that doubt, nor sister nor brother.
Thou must bear it alone, thou must bear it to-day,
Must bear it to-morrow, must bear it for aye.
'Tis light now, thou sayest, and easy to bear,
But the burden will grow with each coming year;
And beware! oh, beware! lest you some day be found
Fallen down with this burden, crushed down to the ground.

“Wouldst thou fly from this spirit of evil so fell?
From the gloom of its shadow, from the charm of its spell?
Wouldst escape? Thou wouldst not? Then remember I told thee
Of a day that would come when this phantom would hold thee
In its strong and long arms, and would lead thee away
Past the moon and the stars, past the limits of day.
Oh, rise, Julian Marable! rise up and drive out
From its place in thy heart, this spirit of doubt.

"But my words fall unheeded; 'tis idle, I know,
To urge this upon you, for me, be it so.
'Tis idle for me—but remember in the years
That are coming, in the midst of their toil and their tears,
To close not thy heart 'gainst the cry and the call
That must come to you always from the pure life of Paul;
This bright life of his will speak when he's near,
Or when he is absent, in tones loud and clear.

"But if these touch thee not, the prayers and the call
Of thy father and mother, of thy sister and Paul,
Yet there still is a chance that thy life may not prove
A sad failure at last—'tis a trial of love,
And your last chance in time; so, then, mark it well,
'Tis the long, softly sweet and clear call of a bell.
In notes that were tuneful, and in tones that were low,
Its chimes have gone forth with the years as they go.

"You have heard them near by, you will hear them afar—
You have heard them in peace, you will hear them in war.
Bend towards them thy soul when the silver notes ring
Thy cares into exile, robbing fate of her sting;
Bend towards them thy soul when the golden notes rise
To lead thee from earth with their sweet harmonies;
This bell is a maiden, her name I can't tell,
Yet she has been, and will be, an Augustan belle."

The old woman turned as she concluded, and went away. Julian and his companion watched in silence her retreating figure. When she passed from sight Julian breathed a sigh of relief and wiped the perspiration from his face. Miss Cora broke into a little laugh, as she said,—

"Well, it was interesting. The old woman is really gifted."

"Yes," assented Julian, recovering himself, and assuming somewhat more audacity than was usual with him, "and I am beginning to suspect really possesses the seer's gift, for has she not just told me what I thought securely hidden in the secret chambers of my heart? You noticed that I am to be rescued at last by a fair Augustan? I know but one."

"And she is—Miss Cora McNair," said that young lady, with such startling ease that Julian blushed a little in spite of himself, and in reply only repeated the name. Thereat Cora laughed.

"I knew what you were going to say," she said, "and couldn't resist the inclination to help you along a little. But really you must not try to identify me with the heroine of your fortune, for does it not make this heroine already in love with you?"

"I did not so understand it, I am sorry to say," said Julian, trying to recall the exact words of the prophetess. "But if it does say so," he continued, "I shall take courage in spite of anything you may now say to the contrary."

"The old woman certainly spoke of this future deliverer of yours as having already called you, and that, too, in the 'sweet tones of a bell.' If that does not show her in love with you, what can?"

"I am sorry to say it does not," replied Julian. "She has only called to me, as she said the life of Paul does, by its beauty and goodness."

"That may be so," assented Cora, "yet her words certainly indicated that this fair unknown has had something to do with your past life. Excuse me, Mr. Marable, but I am really very much interested in your fortune. Do tell me candidly what it all means, for you certainly understand it."

"I certainly do not, Miss Cora; it is as much a mystery to me as to yourself. I know by sight a few young ladies from Augusta, but, as I told you at first, I am acquainted with none from there but Miss Cora McNair."

"Well, it can't possibly be she that was meant, for old Chaffey is too good a judge of people ever to mistake me for one capable of leading the unbelieving back to the straight paths of orthodoxy."

They returned to the city soon afterwards, but in a more serious mood than when they came out. Especially was this the case with Julian, notwithstanding the effort he made to treat the affair with indifference. When he had leisure to think of it he was surprised at the knowledge which old Chaffey had displayed of his character; and he could not help shrinking a little from the picture of himself which she had drawn. Her words lingered with him a long time. He would have liked much to have known to whom the last lines referred; but, being unable to explain them, he concluded finally that they were without foundation, and had been added merely to complete the whole and heighten its effect.

CHAPTER XVIII.

KENNON VISITS INNISFEL.

FOUR weeks have passed, and Kennon Macdermot is on his way to make his promised visit to Innisfel. He went out from Rome on horseback. When about a mile from town he was overtaken by a young man, mounted on a spirited horse, and followed by a half-dozen hounds. The stranger was of medium height, broad-chested and strongly built, and had light hair and eyes, and a ruddy complexion. One glance into his open face was enough to reveal the frank and amiable disposition of the man. Drawing his rein on reaching Kennon's side, he lost no time in opening a conversation with him. Kennon soon learned that his name was John Colbert, and that he lived about four miles from Rome. In return for this information he gave his own name, and stated that he was on a visit to Innisfel.

"Going to visit the Marables, are you?" said Colbert. "A relative of theirs?"

"No; only a friend; a classmate of the young men," answered Kennon.

"I know the family well, sir, and there ain't cleverer folks anywhere. That's what John Colbert has to say for them."

"You are a hunter, I see," said Kennon, after a short pause, and pointing, as he spoke, to the hounds that followed. "What game have you in this country?"

"We have foxes and deer," began Colbert, speaking with new interest, "and in the mountains a few catamounts. We have smaller game, but these I don't allow my dogs to run. Yes, I love a fox or deer chase as well as the next man. When Julian and Paul are at home they are always ready to join me in a hunt, and I'd rather have them with me than anybody in the whole country. One would think, to look at 'em, that they couldn't stand much of such rough sport; but bless you, sir, they don't stand back for anything. If they

ain't true game, there ain't any anywhere. We were once hunting deer in the mountains; Julian and I were going on together, Paul was some distance behind us, and farther back still came their negro boy, Tony, who they sometimes take along, not so much to wait on 'em, as because he wants to go. Suddenly we heard a scream behind, and looking back, we saw a wild-cat on the boy, and Paul running towards him as fast as he could. We turned back too, Julian running ahead of me, for I was watching Paul. I saw him draw his hunting-knife, which was only a large pocket-knife, with a guard, and open it as he ran forward. As soon as he came to the cat he seized it by a foreleg, and struck at it with the knife. The varmint let go the boy, and the next second was on Paul's shoulder. Paul struck at it again, but with what effect I couldn't see. Tony was true grit,—confound it, sir, he had followed those boys too long to be anything else,—he no sooner saw the wild-cat on his young master than he sprang at it like another wild-cat, and clutched it round the throat with both his hands. This only made the beast let go its hold on Paul to jump again on him. Of course he couldn't keep his hands round the neck of the twisting, scratching devil more than a second, but it gave Paul another chance, and when he struck again the thing dropped from Tony, and by the time Julian got there it was dead. I never saw a thing of the kind quicker or neater done."

"And did Paul receive no hurt?" asked Kennon.

"Only some slight scratches on the shoulder. He was cool; he knew where to strike. If he had been excitable, like most of us are, he'd have been almost torn to pieces before he could have killed the beast. The darkey was pretty badly torn."

"You have seen Julian and Paul, I suppose, since their return?" asked Kennon.

"Yes; I spent a day at Innisfel, or rather on the river, about a week ago. They told me, and I was deuced sorry to hear it, that they expected to leave, in a month or six weeks, for Europe, and would probably stay there a couple of years. I had been congratulating myself on their having come home to stay, and here they are going off to be gone longer than ever. I don't know what I will do, unless I can prevail on Miss Bertha to go fox-racing with me. She would have gone with

her brothers and myself the last time we went, if her mother had let her. She would keep up, too, if she went; I never saw a prettier rider."

Kennon did not reply at once, for he was secretly wishing that his experience of country life had been more varied and thorough. With the exception of a few weeks passed at the home of one of his grandparents, he had lived, until he went to Athens, in the city of Montgomery, in Alabama. His experience, therefore, of country sports was limited.

They had now come three miles out from Rome, and to a large and beautiful creek. While passing over the long bridge which spanned it, John Colbert said,—

"You are now within less than half a mile of Mr. Marable's house. At the end of this bridge I take the left hand. How long do you stay, Mr. Macdermot?"

"At least a week—perhaps longer."

"Then I would be glad to have you come out and spend a day with me in my bachelor quarters. Come, and bring Julian and Paul with you; I would ask the whole family, if I thought they would come."

Kennon thanked him for his invitation, after which, bidding each other a good-evening at the foot of the bridge, they parted company.

The sun was nearly down, so that the shadows of the trees were thrown across the road. Kennon was riding along slowly, and with his hat off, that he might the more enjoy the breeze which had just started up. Presently he came in sight of a large white house, on the hill to the right. This he knew was Innisfel. Almost the next second he descried, coming down the path which led from the house through a small side gate to the road, a girlish figure which he thought he knew. In one hand swung her gypsy hat, and behind her came a little negro girl, bearing a basket. As soon as Kennon recognized her, he stopped and dismounted. Bertha, in the passing glance she had taken of the horseman, did not recognize him, and seeing him stop she put on her hat. When, on coming nearer, she saw who it was, a bright smile lit up her face, and giving him her hand, she welcomed him to Innisfel. There was no mock modesty, no awkward trepidation about her, only the rose tints in her cheeks changed to a deeper hue.

"This is a pleasant surprise," she said, "for we had almost ceased to expect you."

"I am two weeks behind the time I proposed. But where are you going, Miss Bertha?"

"To see a sick woman. You will find the family at home. Take this path down which I came; it is nearer than round through the front gate."

"Can I not go with you?"

"Yes, if you wish to. It is but a short distance to where I am going, and I expected to return almost immediately."

He led his horse, walking by Bertha's side. As they went along Bertha told him of the woman she was going to see. She was the mother of Tim Piper, of whom he had before heard her speak. Tim's father was very poor, and being lame and having a sickly wife, he had found great difficulty in supporting his large family, most of whom were young children. Especially had this difficulty increased since Matt Goodson's death. Mr. Marable having erected a small mill on the creek Kennon had just passed, had, two years before, made Mr. Piper his miller. Since then his family had not suffered want, as it had sometimes done before. But when the miller's wife became ill, as she now was, the rest of the family, especially the children, were obliged to suffer for the want of her services. These facts Bertha made known to her companion during their short walk to the cottage of the miller. Arrived there, Kennon, leaving his horse outside the rude picket fence which enclosed the yard, followed Bertha to the house. Three or four white-headed children ran to meet the latter, but drew back when they saw the stranger. Kennon, taking a seat in the open hall which connected the two main rooms of the cottage, said that he would wait there. As the children followed Bertha into their mother's room, he was left with nothing to do but to look around at the prospect. The house, though an humble one, was prettily located; to the left, a hundred yards off, was the mill-house, shaded by tall poplars, and straight before him he could descry, through the trees, the long bridge over which he had recently passed. After a while Bertha came out to the water-bucket, with a tea-kettle in her hand. Finding the bucket nearly empty, she sent her little servant to draw a bucket of fresh water from the well. Then, turning to Kennon, she said,—

"I will make a cup of coffee for Mrs. Piper, and so will be kept here longer than I expected to be. But my being a little late to-night is of no consequence, as I have a valiant knight to see me safely home."

"Can't you put your valiant knight to some service?" asked Kennon. "He feels quite useless, sitting here with nothing to do, from which feeling he is hardly relieved by anticipating his duty as escort to a benighted sister of mercy."

"And even that duty, a moment's thought convinces me," replied Bertha, "will be made unnecessary by the appearance, directly, of one of my brothers, to see that no ferocious catamount assails his tardy sister. But you want something to do,—can't you help that little boy yonder to cut some wood?"

She pointed, as she spoke, to a little seven-year-old urchin, who was hacking away on a stick of wood with an axe so heavy he could hardly lift it.

"Yes; to be sure I can," said Kennon, rising, and going at once to where the child was at work.

At the end of fifteen minutes, Kennon saw a man limping towards him, whom he took to be the miller.

"This is Mr. Piper, I suppose," he said, as the man came up. "Macdermot is my name. I came over with Miss Bertha Marable. I saw your little boy at work here, and came to his help, as you see."

"I'm much obleeged to you, sir, I'm sure," answered the miller. "'Taint of'en I let 'em git out o' wood, but it happened to-day, sartin. I thought, at fust, you was Mr. Paul; he is allers so ready to help when he's 'bout; but I soon seed it warn't his hair, and then I thought it mought be Mr. Julian. So you came with Miss Bertha,—I almos' knowed that, whoever you wus. You are a stranger in these parts, I reckon?"

"Yes," answered Kennon; "I was never in this part of the State before."

"I am sorry you worried yo'self over cuttin' this wood," continued the miller,—“but p'rhaps it is a pleasure to *you*, like it is to some others I knows on, to do a kind turn for a poor man. It's Saturday night, as you know, sir, and I'm allus later at the mill o' Saturday nights than any other. Besides, Tim, my son, who's clerkin' in town, comes home o' Saturday nights, and, tired as he ginerally is, he'll do anything that's to be done. I never seed sich a boy as Tim is fur work,

sir, though it's me that tells it, that shouldn't. If I happen to be late 'bout having my wood cut, as I was this even', it'll do no good to tell him to be quiet and let it alone, fur he *will* cut it. An', if there's nothin' else fur him to do, he'll cut enough to last half through the next week. I'll be tryin' all the time to git him to take his rest, knowin' how he's needin' of it; but it's no use, sir, the boy will work."

"I can well believe it," answered Kennon, "from all that I have heard of him."

"I am proud to hear you say so, I'm sure, sir," said Mr. Piper, his interest in his subject being evidently increased by the sympathy shown by Kennon's words. "Tim is not only a smart boy, but he's a good boy; and I'm glad to say it, he's a doin' well. What that boy is, sir, he owes to Mr. Marable and his sons. Nor is Tim the only one that Mr. Marable has helped,—nor Tim's father; no, he is knowed all through this country as the poor man's friend. But excuse me for talkin' so much, sir; it's a failin' o' mine, 'specially when I git started on Mr. Marable. God only knows what's in my heart towards that man and his family."

Bertha's little servant now came up to say that her mistress was ready to return.

"I must take one look at her sprightly face afore she goes," said the miller, limping along by the side of Kennon. "Why, sir, just to look at her 'liveus me up fur a whole week,—makes me feel younger like."

Bertha joined them in the open passage.

"I was jist a-tellin' the young gentleman here, Miss Bertha, that I must have one look at you 'fore you got off," said the loquacious miller, taking off his hat as he spoke.

"Go in, Mr. Piper," said Bertha, "and try a cup of the coffee I have just made for your wife. I will want to know, when I come again, how you liked it. Good-night."

"Good-night," and, as he limped into his wife's room, he added, in a tone not intended to be heard, "and may God bless you and yours!"

As Kennon and Bertha passed through the gate, the latter expressed some surprise that neither of her brothers had yet made his appearance. When they entered the main road they saw, some distance ahead of them, two men, one of whom held a horse by the bridle. The latter immediately mounted

the horse and came towards them; as soon as he had passed, he put his horse into a gallop. The pedestrian likewise advanced towards them, and at a quick pace. Paul, for it was he, recognized his sister while he was yet some distance off; but it was not until he had come close to the stranger that he recognized in him his friend. He sprang to him, and, seizing his hand, gave him a hearty welcome to Innisfel. After their mutual greetings, Paul proposed to take charge of Kennon's horse, but this the latter would not permit, saying that he was about as able to do that as was Paul.

"And where did you meet with this loitering sister of mine?" asked Paul, "for, if I mistake not, you came out of the mill road."

"We met just here, was it not, Miss Bertha?" replied Kennon.

"Yes," assented Bertha. "I told Mr. Macdermot that he would find you all at the house, but when I told him where I was going, he, conceiving our wild-looking country to be still infested by bears, panthers, and the like, would not permit me to go alone. Besides, I told him I would return immediately."

"Which it seems you did not do," said her brother.

"No, we stayed to make the sick woman a cup of coffee."

"We? I suppose you had Kennon's invaluable assistance in the making of said coffee?"

"She certainly did," said Kennon, "as the blisters on my hands will testify for a month to come."

"Yes, he wanted something to do, and I put him to cutting wood."

"That looks rather hard, Bertha, to put your guest, immediately on his arrival, to cutting wood."

"It does," answered the girl, laughing, "but Mr. Kennon will pardon my share in it, I know."

"Yes, provided that, under similar circumstances, you will not wait for me to offer my services, but will straightway command them."

"Very well; I would not have waited this evening, but, as Paul says, you had *just* come."

"You should be more wary, Kennon, how you put power into feminine hands. The more you give, the more they will exact."

"Do listen at my dear brother! when, an hour ago, he almost scolded me because, knowing that he had just returned from the river and was tired, I would not let him go with me to Mr. Piper's. But, to change the subject, who was it you were talking to in the road, Paul?"

"An old friend, Will Duke. He stopped to talk to me about something in which he was very much interested. I stopped to hear him, because I thought you would stay at Mr. Piper's until some one came for you, as night was so near. So you understand why you did not see me sooner."

The welcome which Kennon received from the other members of the family was most gratifying to him, and well calculated to make a more diffident young gentleman than himself feel at home.

"It is, indeed, a pleasure," said Mr. Marable, "to welcome a son of Morton Macdermot to Innisfel; and not only for his father's sake, but for his own."

Soon after his arrival tea was announced. At the conclusion of the meal, a short chapter from the Bible was read, a hymn was sung, and then all bowed, listening, as Mr. Marable led in prayer to that personal God by whom he believed himself to be daily directed and sustained.

From the tea-table the family, with their guest, withdrew to the drawing-room. Bertha, after a while, took a seat at the piano, and made some very sweet music; especially were the songs she sang sweet and expressive. Mrs. Marable then played several fine selections from operas; after which duets were played,—the first by Paul and Bertha, the next by Bertha and Hattie. Thus, with conversation and music, the evening passed pleasantly to all. Not until twelve o'clock did they separate for the night.

Before Julian and Paul retired to their room, the latter took his brother by the arm, and they walked off into the lawn together.

"I want to say something to you, Julian," said Paul, as they sat down on a bench beneath a large oak. "As I got into the road this evening, when going to join Bertha, a buggy passed just ahead of me, in which were a man and young woman. It was twilight, but I thought I recognized in the man our friend Ned Winter; I didn't see the girl's face, as it was veiled. No sooner were they out of sight, than Will

Duke came along on horseback. He stopped as soon as he saw me. 'I am glad I've met you, Paul,' he said; 'you saw the buggy which has just passed, I suppose?' I told him that I had, and that I thought the man was Ned Winter. 'You're right,' says he, 'and the girl is Mennie Briggs. You know Ned has always had a liking for Mennie, and she for him. Now I know, I had it from Rabie, that her father has forbidden her to keep company with Ned, yet she is constantly going out with him, as she is this evening. Ned's mother, as you have heard, perhaps, died a few months ago. Since then he has become of age, and having come into possession of the little property she left, some four or five thousand dollars, I believe, he has turned it into money, and is trying to see how fast he can spend it. From what Rabie has told me, I've been led to watch the young gentleman for some time, and, from all I've seen, I'm satisfied he don't mean any good to Mennie Briggs; confound him! he never did have any principle. Now, what I want is that old man Briggs may know all this,—may know what is hanging over his house. But how to make him understand it fully, I don't know. Miss Rabie, young as she is, don't like the way matters are going on, but she don't know what to do; Mrs. Briggs only laughs at it; and it won't do for me to speak to him about it. Now, Paul, I've told you this, knowing how you used to like old Briggs, and how you used to stand by the girls,—have told you, hoping that you may do that for Mennie which I don't know how to do.' Such were Duke's words to me, when our conversation was interrupted by the approach of Kennon and Bertha. And now, Julian, I want you to help me devise some means by which this intimacy between Ned and Mennie may be broken up."

"It's a bad business, Paul," answered Julian. "I doubt the possibility of breaking it up, knowing the girl's bent as I do. If Mr. Briggs were to send her off, Ned would follow her; and his chances to see her would then be better than they now are. I know of nothing else but for you to tell father all the facts, and let him talk to Mr. Briggs about it."

"I had thought of that plan, but don't like it," said Paul. "Mr. Briggs, as you know, will never watch anybody; he would only talk to Mennie, as he has doubtless already done; would perhaps talk harshly to her, and thereby make matters worse. I have thought of, I think, a better plan. It is for

you and me to talk to Mennie. We used to have some influence with her. I remember the time when she and Rabie, so it seemed to me, were glad to have us with them, and when they took some pains to make us think well of them. Let us go to Mennie, and speak to her plainly of Ned Winter's character. Going thus, and talking to her as brothers would talk to a sister, she will surely listen to us. What say you?"

"That she will listen to us," replied Julian, "I have little doubt, but that she will be guided by us I have very grave doubts. In fact, I am satisfied she will not be. Your plan, my dear brother, as far as relates to me, is wholly at fault. My presence, I fear, would weaken rather than strengthen your influence."

"You are mistaken, Julian. No one knows Ned better than you do. You can tell her what you have yourself seen and heard; not what you have heard others say of him."

"Your plan will prove visionary, I must still think," replied Julian.

"Perhaps so; yet it is the best that I have. If you won't go with me, I will go alone." Paul spoke this with calm determination.

"If you insist on my going with you," said Julian, "I am at your service."

"Then I do insist on it."

"When shall we go?"

"The sooner the better: to-morrow afternoon."

CHAPTER XIX.

MENNIE'S TWO BROTHERS.

THE next day was Sunday. At an early hour a carriage and two buggies stood at the front gate ready to convey the family and their guest to religious services in the city. Kennon was on the point of asking Bertha to be his companion in one of the buggies, when Paul thwarted his purpose by saying,—

"I will not see much of you to-day, Kennon, so will take you with me in one of the buggies." Of course he gave a cheerful assent.

Julian, who had taken the boy Tony in the other buggy, with himself as his driver, was leaning lazily back, smoking a cigar, when Hattie, coming up to the vehicle, said,—

"Julie, let me go with you. I will drive."

"Get out, Tony," said Julian, "and help your Miss Hattie into the buggy. You can get up on the dickey of the carriage, or behind it, just as you please."

Tony obeyed with alacrity, though disappointed in his expectation of having a "good chat with Mas' Julian." The vehicles then moved off, Julian's bringing up the rear.

After the services were over, Paul found an opportunity of speaking a few words privately to Rabie Briggs.

"Rabie," he said, "Julian and I propose to call at your father's house this afternoon at four o'clock. One object I have in calling is to speak to Mennie of Ned Winter. I have been talking to Will Duke about it; you will therefore understand my object."

"I do," she replied. "I am so glad that you are coming!" and her dark eyes spoke more than her words.

The golden head again bent toward the girl.

"You will see that we have an opportunity to speak to her alone?"

"I will. Paul, how kind in you!"

"No thanks, Rabie. You have a true friend in Will Duke, and I am glad to find it so."

"Yes. Will is a little rough, as he always was, but he has a kind heart,—which no one knows better than I do."

Paul then, bidding her good-morning, went to rejoin Kennon.

That afternoon, at four o'clock, Julian and Paul were approaching the familiar red house on the hill.

"I suppose, Paul," said Julian, as they went along, "you are conscious that you will have to be chief spokesman in the interview with Mennie?"

"Yes, I have expected that, after what you said last night; but you must second me wherever you can, for I am confident of your influence with her."

"But I am not confident of it. I am myself too impure. How can I, with any consistency, warn a girl against a man between whose habits and my own there is so little difference?"

Paul stopped, and stepping in front of his brother, while he kept one hand on his arm, said,—

"Don't ever think or say, Julian Marable, that you are like Ned Winter. I tell you there is an infinite distance between you. You have engaged, recklessly, in some of the dissipated habits of which he is guilty; but I tell you, my brother, you are not like him. It is impossible that you can be!"

Julian was impressed by his brother's confidence in him; but making no reply, the two walked on silently to Mr. Briggs's door. They were met by Rabie, who was on the lookout for them. All the family were soon in the parlor to see their old friends. It was very evident that Mr. Briggs would never get over his partiality for his old favorite. Mrs. Briggs was the same thoughtless, talkative little woman she had always been. The young men thought they could see a change in Mennie; there was an expression on her face, always hitherto so bright and free from care, which was like the shadow of a trouble, a trouble which she fain would hide even from herself.

In a short time Mr. Stubbins came in, in no whit different from the Stubbins of five years before. His short, sandy hair was standing erect, as usual, and above his ear was the same inevitable pencil. He carried in his hand a little bunch of

flowers. Coming in quietly, and not noticing that any one was present besides the family, he advanced to Mennie and offered her the flowers. She seemed annoyed by his act, and accepted them silently. His attention being then called to the presence of Julian and Paul, he turned towards them blushing, but yet, in his stiff, odd way, greeted them cordially. He did not remain long, but went away at the end of a half-hour, saying that he had an engagement. In another half-hour Mr. Briggs and his wife withdrew, with the three younger children. Soon afterwards Rabie fulfilled her promise to Paul by asking him to excuse her absence for a few minutes.

The wished for yet dreaded opportunity was at hand. Paul lost no time in taking advantage of it. Crossing the room to where Mennie was, he took a seat close beside her.

"Mennie," he said, "I want to talk to you about the old days, when Julian and I lived with you here. Your father was always kind and patient with us; and you and Rabie were always such pleasant girls, so full of good-nature, and so ready to do us any little favor that you could, that the time passed very pleasantly. I remember once, Mennie, when Julian and I, one Friday evening, were on our way home from school, we were talking about you two girls,—you and Rabie. I had that day seen Julian stop one of the school-boys from saying something of you, Mennie, which he had no right to say. As we went on home, I told Julian how glad I was to see him silence the boy who was speaking so of you. Then we said that if there were any boys in school mean enough to say things of you and Rabie that they should not say, it was only because you had no brothers to take your part. And then, as we walked along, we agreed, Julian and I, that we would be your brothers; that henceforth we would see to it that your names were not lightly taken on the play-ground. It perhaps seems strange to you, Mennie, that I should tell you this, but I do it to show you how Julian and I once agreed to be brothers to you and Rabie; and I want to assure you now that time has wrought no change in our feelings towards you; that we are as ready to speak in your behalf now as we were then,—as ready to fight for you to-day as we were then."

Mennie being a girl of quick perception, was not slow in coming to a correct conclusion as to Paul's object. The consciousness that she was acting rashly, and that she needed the

advice an honest brother might give, aided her in coming to a right conclusion. She listened to Paul with a face constantly changing its hue. At one moment she would almost yield to the touching earnestness of the young man, as his words recalled other days,—days which, under different circumstances, she would like to have had recalled. Then, again, the same evil spirit in her heart which had closed it against the advice of her father, and had urged her forward on her dangerous course, prompted her to resent the intended interference. Trying to speak with indifference, she said,—

“You must speak more plainly, Mr. Paul; I don’t understand you.”

“It was once Paul, simply Paul; will you permit me to still call you Mennie? I will speak plainly,” and the yellow hair approached still nearer to the girl. “Yes, I will speak to you as I would to my own sister. I came to warn you, Mennie, against one who is unworthy of you; whose association with you can have no other effect than to injure your good name, because every one knows him to be worthless and utterly devoid of principle.”

“Hold, Mr. Marable! Of whom are you speaking?” asked the girl, pale and trembling.

“Of the school-boy whom Julian once silenced when his cowardly tongue was slandering Mennie Briggs. I am speaking of Ned Winter.”

Mennie covered her face with her hands, but presently looked up, and with a defiant expression in her eyes.

“Why do you mention that boyish affair, Mr. Paul?” she asked. “What is it to me what Mr. Winter may have said four or five years ago? Besides, granting that he is as bad as you say he is, what is that to me? Why do you warn me against him?”

“Is there not cause, Mennie? Is it not a fact that you are in the habit of meeting him—if not clandestinely, yet not altogether openly—and taking buggy-rides with him into the country? And this, too, against your father’s advice?”

“Yes, I have met him, and have gone with him a few times into the country,” replied the girl. “What if I have? Am I obliged to discard him because other young ladies have done so? Is he necessarily wicked because everybody says he is? Because he is gay and wild, does that make him utterly with-

out principle. No, I will not believe it. I am surprised, Mr. Paul Marable, that you should have thought it necessary to have come all the way here to warn me against one whom I have known all my life."

"Miss Mennie," said Julian, speaking now for the first time, "I have hitherto kept silent, because I thought it more fit that my brother should speak to you in this matter. But I must, as wicked as my own life has been, I feel that I must join Paul in urging you to discontinue all intercourse with one whom I know to be wholly undeserving of your confidence or esteem. Pardon me, Miss Mennie, if I speak plainly to you. I tell you candidly that Ned Winter is not to be trusted. I judge him thus not because I know him, personally know him, to be addicted to such evil habits as drinking, swearing, and gambling,—for he might indulge in these practices and yet be within the pale of hope,—but because I have seen him engage in transactions the character of which showed him to be without the honor of a gentleman."

"I will hear no more of it, Mr. Julian," said the strangely infatuated girl, rising from her seat. "How can you talk so of your old friend and classmate, when he speaks of you as though he thought more of you than of any one else?" Then, turning to Paul, she said, with a certain reckless air, "I think, Mr. Paul Marable, that the sooner you bring this interview to an end the better it will be for all parties."

As she said this, the brothers rose likewise to their feet. Paul, standing in front of the girl; and with his arms crossed upon his breast, said, simply and sorrowfully,—

"We have done what we could; we have once more kept the old pledge to stand by you and Rabie as brothers. Forgive us, Mennie, for having caused you pain. Good-by."

He turned to leave her, but stopped on the threshold of the door as the word "Paul," softly spoken, reached his ears. He turned and faced the girl once more. The defiant expression had left her face; she was pale, and tears were starting to her eyes. She held out her hand to him.

"Paul, don't leave me thus," she said,—“don't go away thinking hard of me. Oh, Paul, forgive me for causing *you* pain!"

Paul had taken the outstretched hand, and was about to again urge her to renounce Ned, when Stubbins entered the

doorway. Mennie, to hide her tears, which were now falling fast, hastened from the room. The little schoolmaster was sorely puzzled by the scene which met his eyes as he entered the room, but as the young men also left immediately, without offering any explanation, he was forced to explain it to himself as best he could. The only conclusion which the simple-minded man could arrive at was that Paul Marable was in love with Mennie. This alone was definite; whatever other opinions he may have tried to form in regard to it were shadowy.

"What must we expect, Julian?" asked Paul, as the brothers rode back towards Innisfel.

"We must expect the worst," answered Julian. "I never saw such infatuation."

"No, I will not expect the worst; for she was evidently affected, very much affected, by what we said. And if Stubbins had stayed out a few minutes longer, I think she would have promised to see Ned no more."

"Very likely," assented Julian, "but that she would have kept such a promise I think very unlikely. Did you notice Stubbins give her the flowers when he first came in? I have an idea he is in love with her."

"Yes, I noticed it; and I saw, too, that she took them ungraciously. Stubbins would never win Mennie, even though no Ned Winter stood in his way."

CHAPTER XX.

A HARMLESS TURF.

DURING the long sultry days that followed the one on which occurred the events mentioned in the last chapter, the household at Innisfel, for the most part, stayed within doors. They found many ways, however, to make the time pass pleasantly. The forenoon was usually passed in the library, where together they read some entertaining book. They read by turns, all taking part. The reading was often interrupted to discuss various subjects suggested by it, and for criticism. When tired of reading they would go into the drawing-room and amuse themselves by playing various games, such as chess, backgammon, whist, and euchre. In playing the last two, Julian and Paul were generally partners against Kennon and Bertha. When tired of these they had recourse to music, a never-failing source of pleasure to them all. Then again, sometimes, early in the morning, but more often late in the afternoon, the younger members of the family, with their guest, would ride out, to canter along the shaded roads or through the open forests.

Thus the days of Kennon's visit passed until the middle of the second week. On Wednesday evening, after the young people had returned from their ride, and while all were sitting in the portico, they saw enter the front gate at the road a party of four, two men and two ladies, mounted on fine horses, and followed by half a dozen hounds.

"We shall have to change our programme for the morrow," said Julian, "for here comes John Colbert and his two sisters; the second gentleman I don't recognize."

"I am glad they are coming," said Bertha. Then addressing herself to Kennon, she added, "The young ladies are twins; they are full of life, and very pretty, so you must expect to lose your heart to one of them."

The two brothers, with their sister, went to meet their

friends and bring them in. The former were not a little surprised to recognize in the stranger their old classmate Epaminondas Blivins.

"I suppose you know this spectacled gentleman," began Colbert, as soon as he came near enough to be heard. "He was in college with you, in your class, I believe he says. I thought to come over and show the young gentleman, your guest, some attention. I don't want strangers, after coming among us, to go away with the idea that we are an unsocial set up here in the mountains. As soon as I proposed to come, Mr. Blivins concluded to come with me, and then the girls said they wouldn't be left by themselves,—so here we all are."

The two brothers welcomed them all, and at once proceeded to help the young ladies to alight. The twin sisters, Lizzie and Mary Colbert, were a few months older than Bertha. They were very much alike; had laughing blue eyes, and cheeks and lips whose fresh bloom spoke of health and good-nature. Bertha, after being introduced to Mr. Blivins, led her friends into the house. Paul followed with Blivins.

"Come, Julian," said Colbert, when the others had got out of hearing, "let's walk round a little and look at your horses and colts; I want to talk to you, too, about this fellow Blivins. Why, confound me," he continued, as they walked off towards the stables, "if I ever saw just such another man!"

"I have no idea that you ever did," said Julian, dryly.

"A couple of weeks ago," continued Colbert, "he met with Liz and Mol, as they were coming home from Winchester, where, you know, they are going to school. Well, sir, he hadn't known them an hour before he tells them, confidentially, a long love-story of his own. When the girls parted from him they never expected to see or hear of him again; but three days ago who should they see coming out but their railroad friend, Epaminondas Blivins. He was quite blue; nor was he long in letting the girls know the cause of his blueness. His love-affair that he had told them of when he first met them, had had an unfortunate end. I went over the next day to make his acquaintance. I took him for a walk about the farm, during which he told me all his recent troubles, which seemed, however, to rest on him lightly; in fact, he seemed to take a pleasure in telling them over. He made out the lady, whom he called Miss Polly Magee, to be

very much in love with him; to prove which he repeated many things that she had said to him, but how they proved it I couldn't see, for the life of me. Though she never said so, in so many words, he was confident that she loved him. And then he went on to tell how she was at last forced, 'by circumstances over which she had no control,' to accept another instead of himself. These circumstances he explained at great length, but confound my eyes if I could see the *forcing* part of it. Well, to make a long story short, he's already bravely over his late disappointment, for he is in love with Liz; and he told her so the second evening after he came. She, of course, told it to her sister; for the girls saw through him at once, and have had their fun out of him. So, the next day, when he began to say the same things to Mol, calling her Miss Lizzie, she let him go on, and he hasn't yet found out his mistake,—this, too, when he has boasted several times that *he* will never mistake one for the other. You, of course, know all about him; who is he?"

"I can't tell you much more than you know," replied Julian. "He is an odd fellow; but his oddity is due to his exuberant vanity, which, having overgrown his nature, now hides or warps it. While in college he was the constant butt of some joke. He was always in love with some girl, but heretofore only one at a time."

A little while after Julian and Colbert had joined the others on the portico, the latter, turning to Bertha, said,—

"Miss Bertha, I challenge you to a half-mile race, to be run in the morning before sunrise."

"I will accept it, provided you promise to do your best," answered Bertha.

"Certainly, I will do that," he replied, "for you remember you beat me the last time we ran, and I have no mind to be beaten twice in succession by the same lady."

The fair twins accepted similar challenges from Julian and Paul.

"My challenge," said Kennon, "is to the first victress."

"Then, Blivins," said Colbert, "you'll have to run with the first victor—unless Miss Hattie will run with you."

"No," spoke Paul; "we can't expect Mr. Blivins to run, as he is near-sighted."

"Thank you, Paul," said Blivins, "but I prefer to take part

in these chivalric and—ah—martial—if I may use the expression—exercises; provided Miss Hattie will do me the honor to accept my challenge.”

“If you will run,” replied Paul, “I will accept it for her, and will ride for her. I will see to it, Hattie, that you make a good race.”

“Thank you, Paul,” said the child, “but I choose to do my own riding. Don’t be afraid for me; my pony is gentle enough, and I know how to manage him.”

After tea the family, with their guests, assembled in the parlor. Paul exerted himself to make his guests enjoy the evening. His efforts, being heartily seconded by Bertha, and, in a less degree, by Julian, were wholly successful. Mr. Marable and his wife withdrew at ten o’clock, some two hours before the younger people separated for the night. Before they retired they agreed to spend the morrow on the river; that they would devote the forenoon to fishing, would eat their dinner at Bluestone Spring, and in the afternoon would go up the river, some five or six miles, to visit Armuchee Cave, named so from a creek which emptied into the river near by.

Early the next morning, the parties who were to try the speed of their respective horses in a half-mile heat were assembled at the foot of the long bridge which was mentioned in a former chapter. They had a clean road, nearly level, and, except one slight turn, straight.

Bertha was mounted on a beautiful and spirited bay. Looking upon her as she moved along, looking upon her graceful form and into her radiant face, it was impossible not to feel the influence of her beauty. She and Colbert rode first. Their horses being equally spirited, the result depended chiefly on the skill of the riders. They kept squarely together for more than half the distance, when Bertha, speaking in a quick and eager tone to her horse, and at the same time slackening her rein, shot the length of her horse ahead, which advantage she kept until the goal was reached.

“So you are beaten again, Mr. Colbert,” Bertha said, as soon as she could draw up her horse. “But I’m afraid you did not do your best.”

“Yes, I did,” he answered, looking a little mortified at the result. “I only wish you may beat our city-raised friend as fairly.”

They then took their station near the goal, to watch the others as they came in.

Julian and Mary Colbert came next. Julian, though a good rider, and urging his horse, seemingly, to his utmost, came in behind. After them came Paul and Lizzie. While the girl was eagerly urging her horse to increase his speed, Paul, seemingly without effort, kept beside her. His graceful form was leaning slightly forward, and, though moving with such rapidity that his yellow hair was streaming out behind, he was talking to his companion with as much ease as if his gait was only the gentlest amble. He seemed a part of the black, fiery-eyed, light-footed creature that he rode. As they approached the goal he was seen by those looking on to slightly draw his rein, thus permitting the young lady to come in ahead by half her horse's length.

"Beaten," said Paul, as he came with his companion to where the others stood. "Miss Lizzie, you are a fine rider; let me congratulate you."

Then lifting his hat and looking at the three gentlemen, he said, with a smile,—

"I acknowledge myself vanquished by Miss Lizzie, but if any gentleman of the party thinks that he can win the same race from me, I am ready, as soon as our first programme is ended, to give him an opportunity to do so."

"Don't expect me to run with you, Paul," said Julian. "I know rather too well both you and your horse."

"I know them, too," muttered Colbert; "but I ain't the man to back out when a challenge is thrown me, and so will run with you—unless Mr. Macdermot wishes to do so; I'll of course yield to him."

"No," replied Paul, "I have too much advantage over Kennon in the knowledge that I and my horse have of each other. He has a good horse, but they are yet comparatively strangers. So we will ride, John."

The party at length becoming impatient waiting for the appearance of Blivins and his child-competitor, the two couples who were to ride again concluded to return to the bridge and see what delayed them. They had advanced but a hundred yards on their return when Blivins and Hattie came in sight. The silvery voice of the child was heard in laughter even before they made their appearance. Hattie, dressed in a beau-

tiful riding-habit, was cantering along on her cream-colored pony, as easily and gracefully as the swallow skims the lake. To the charming picture of grace and loveliness she presented, the appearance of her companion was a striking contrast. His horse was in a long, hard trot; he had started in a trot, and every effort Blivins had made to make him change his gait only served to make him trot faster and harder. By the time he came in sight of the others, his feet had hopelessly lost the stirrups, he was stooped over, with both hands grasping the horse's mane, his hat was gone, and the legs of his pantaloons had worked up to his knees. This last feature in his appearance would have been the more mortifying to him from the fact of his having on a pair of low-quarter shoes, instead of boots; but he was in happy ignorance not only of this and of his appearance generally, but even of the loss of his hat. This was not because he was so intent upon the race,—he had quite lost sight of that,—but because the difficulty of maintaining his seat so completely absorbed his attention. He did not hear the merry laugh of his young companion; nor had he heard her when she told him of the loss of his hat.

It was impossible for the approaching party to repress their laughter. Colbert and Kennon made little effort to do so; Bertha made an effort, but a futile one; Paul succeeded better in restraining himself. He saw, as Blivins came nearer, that his desperate exertions to keep his seat were getting to be despairing ones, and that he would, in all probability, lose it before he reached the goal; he therefore determined to stop him. To this end he placed his horse across the road, telling the others to do likewise. By this means he expected Blivins's horse to stop gradually, for if he were to suddenly stop the result would be what he wished to prevent. As soon as the success of his plan was apparent, Bertha started forward, followed by John and Kennon. Paul, after telling Hattie to ride on to where Julian and the two Miss Colberts were, sought to restore Blivins's evenness of temper.

"I know what's the matter, Blivins," he said; "you are riding one of those horses which, when they once take a gait, it is impossible to get them out of it. Get down and give yourself a good shake and you'll be all right. Get down on the other side of your horse, so as to be out of sight of the young ladies back there, for your pants have worked up rather

high. Put your spectacles on first—I see you have them in your hand.”

“Demnition! Paul, where am I?” said Blivins, with a blow, and proceeding slowly to adjust his spectacles; “and where is Miss Hattie?”

“We are within about a hundred yards of the goal; the post which marks it stands close to where you see Julian and the young ladies. Hattie is just joining them.”

“You don’t mean to say, Paul, that that post is not three good miles behind us? You don’t mean to say that I have not left Miss Harriet far behind? Why, demn the horse, I thought he never intended to stop again.”

After Blivins had dismounted and shaken his clothes into something like their proper fit, Paul asked,—

“Where is your hat?”

“My hat,” he said, putting his hand to his head; “is my hat gone?”

“You didn’t know it? Never mind; I’ll go on and look it up for you. Now mount your horse, and ride on to where you see Julian and the young ladies.”

“How would it do for me to walk and lead my horse?”

“Not so well; ride, but go slowly.”

Paul then galloped on after his companions. Stopping by the way to pick up Blivins’s chimney-pot hat, he reached the foot of the bridge as Kennon and Bertha were preparing to start. As they went off, John said,—

“Your friend sits his horse well. His talk about being city-raised and not used to horses is all gammon, I suspect. If it isn’t, he is a born horseman, that’s all.”

Five minutes later he and Paul started, the latter carrying in his right hand Blivins’s hat.

“Yes,” said Paul, in reply to something Colbert had said just before starting, “some men are naturally much better horsemen than others. He who has a quick and firm hand, a steady eye, and a strong will, may be a fearless, if not a graceful, rider. In such a one the horse instinctively recognizes a master; he recognizes him in the glance of his eye, in the touch of his hand, and in the tones of his voice; in the latter, perhaps, more surely than in anything else.”

Colbert made no reply to this; he hardly comprehended it, so intent was he upon the race. Paul, however, continued to

talk, now to his competitor, and now, in a lower tone, to his horse. When they had come within about one hundred and thirty yards of the goal, Paul bent forward, spoke a few quick words to his horse, and, at the same time, slackened his rein. The horse sprang forward at once ahead of the other. Paul used neither whip nor spur, but depended altogether upon his management of the reins, and the words he from time to time used. He reached the post fully ten yards in advance of Colbert. The latter accepted his defeat good-naturedly, saying,—

“I expected to be beaten, but expected to come in nearer than I did.” Then asking the result of the race between Kennon and Bertha, and learning that they had come in head and head, he seemed somewhat disappointed; but his good-nature was too thorough for his chagrin to be lasting.

CHAPTER XXI.

ARMUCHEE CAVE.

THE party now returned to the house. After doing justice to Mrs. Marable's excellent breakfast, they proceeded to the river, going on foot, much to Blivins's relief. According to their programme, they devoted the forenoon to fishing. The day proving very sultry, however, they did little more than row along the banks beneath the overhanging trees. At noon they repaired to the spring in the grove. Here they enjoyed the pleasant shade, and the cool and refreshing waters of the fountain. A breeze starting up soon after they landed, added much to their comfort. Spreading their lunch upon one of the broad, flat stones which lay near to the spring, they partook of it with hearty enjoyment. During the couple of hours they rested here, the hitherto brazen sky became overcast with clouds. This was a grateful change, and determined them to proceed with their original design of visiting Armuchee Cave, which none of them had seen except Julian and Paul. They did not believe that it would rain; but if it should, they were well supplied with umbrellas.

They were in a small sail-boat and two bateaux, one of the latter being in tow of the skiff. The wind was favorable for their rapid progress, as it blew up the river. After a couple of hours' steady sailing they reached the place where they were to land. Ascending the river-bank, they found themselves in a wild and rugged region. On their left rose a precipitous mountain, while in front and on their right was a succession of wooded hills, separated from each other by deep ravines. With some difficulty they reached the mouth of the cave, which was in the side of the mountain, at a considerable elevation above its base. But the difficulties of the descent into the cave were greater than those they had just surmounted in reaching its mouth. They succeeded, however, at length, in safely finding its floor. The cavern proved to have several

apartments, of irregular shape and of different sizes, and within these were the stalactites, stalagmites, limestone columns, and other formations peculiar to caves in the limestone region.

When they had wandered into what seemed the farthest room from the entrance, they heard a noise which sounded like the rumbling of a wagon over a rough road, but believing that no wagon could pass over the mountain, they concluded it must be the river, which they knew to be near by. As they kept silent for a few moments to listen, they were startled to hear what seemed the voices of two men conversing in a low tone. The apartment they were in was small, and, though dimly lighted, they knew that the parties whom they heard talking were not within it, nor could they be, they were equally confident, in any of the rooms they had just passed through. Paul lighted a lantern which he had brought in anticipation of this visit, but which he had not before had occasion to use, and proceeded to examine more closely the sides of the apartment.

He found in its darkest corner, and half concealed by a broken column, an aperture about one foot in diameter. As he held the lamp close to it he was surprised to feel upon his hands and face a cold stream of air coming from it. He bent his head closer to it, and was again surprised to hear a voice say distinctly, and as if near at hand,—

“Ye say he’s gone off with Briggs’s gal?”

The words riveted Paul’s attention, and made him put his ear still nearer to the hole.

“Yes,” answered a second voice. “Damn him, he wanted me to tie the knot for him!”

“Ho, ho, a tight knot it would ha’ been, now, wouldn’t it?”

“Tight enough, tight enough. But I wouldn’t do it—no, not for him.”

“When did they leave?”

“To-day, by the twelve o’clock train. But it strikes me, Andy, that thou art purposely wandering from the subject we were on. Come, let us take another drink, and then come back to our subject.”

After a short pause the same voice continued, but in a lower tone, as if the person was speaking to himself,—

"I must be in Savannah by Friday."

"You meet the young 'un there, I s'pose?" asked the other voice.

"Young one—what young one?"

"Him as we was talkin' of."

"Ned Winter? Do you call him a young one? In the ways of the world, and in deviltry, I should say he is quite old,—as old as any of us."

"You'll jine him there, I s'pose?"

"In Savannah? Well, yes, I s'pose I will. But I must say, Andy, you are inclined to be inquisitive for once in your life."

The voices now appeared to recede, and Paul, though he listened intently, heard nothing more distinctly. He thought that he once heard the name of old Chaffey Phipps mentioned, but of this he was not sure. Believing that he would gain no further information, he rose up, and with his course of action already decided upon. As though he had heard nothing of an exciting nature, he showed the aperture to the others, and expressed the opinion that it was a communication with the outside air, and that its other mouth was on, or near, the bank of the river. It was also his opinion, based on the constant flow of air through it, that its other mouth opened into a cove or deep recess washed out in the bank by the river, and that persons talking in this recess could be heard by any one in the room in which they were, while a person talking within the cave, unless he placed his mouth close to the aperture, could not be heard by those without. Immediately after this explanation he proposed that they leave the cave, and go to the bank of the river in search of the other mouth of the tunnel they had discovered.

When he had seen all the party safe again on the outside of the hill, and safely down the most rugged part of the declivity, he held Julian back until the others were out of hearing, and then told him all that he had heard in the cave. He concluded by saying,—

"Now, Julian, I intend to follow Mennie,—will follow her in the hope of bringing her back, of still saving her. A forlorn hope, it seems; still, I must follow her. I must leave at once, in order to be in time for the nine o'clock train. I would like to go in search of the parties I heard talking, for,

if one of them is to meet Ned in Savannah on Friday, he must take the same train that I will take; and if I could identify him, I would only have to keep my eyes on him to eventually come up with Ned; but I will not have time to look for him. I will go by home, so you need say nothing there of the cause of my absence. I will tell Kennon briefly why I leave him, but you must explain it to him more fully when you have an opportunity. After I am gone, take the others in search of the tunnel, and try and get your eyes on the parties I heard talking."

"From what you tell me, Paul," said Julian, "I believe the man you want to see is no other than George Brenham, the old hermit of the spring. Look out for him, but don't expect to find him as you saw him then; for some reason of his own, he constantly changes his appearance."

They walked on, and came up with the others as they were taking their places in the boats. Paul first called Kennon aside, and telling him that he was called away, and would probably be gone several days, asked him to continue his visit until his return. Kennon saying that he was compelled to leave on Friday, Paul, believing that he could not return by that time, bade him good-by, after telling him how much he had enjoyed his visit, and also that Julian would explain to him more fully why he was obliged to leave him.

He then stepped into one of the bateaux, unloosed it, and, standing with one hand resting on the skiff, thus spoke to his friends:

"One word to you, my friends," he said, by way of directing attention to himself. "I have just received information of such a character as makes it necessary for me to go at once to Rome. You may all feel assured that I regret the necessity which compels me to part from company so agreeable. I wish you all a most pleasant evening. Good-by!"

The rest of the party, except Julian and Kennon, received this announcement with surprise, and would have questioned Paul as to when and where he had received such information, had it not been evident that he did not wish to be so questioned. As soon as he had spoken he took his seat, and was soon rowing lustily down the river.

The rest of the party, under Julian's guidance, proceeded to search for the outer mouth of the tunnel they had discovered.

On the same side of the river on which they then were there were shoals through which it was impossible to pass, and which stretched obliquely nearly across the stream. Crossing, therefore, to the other side, they sailed up the stream until the shoals were passed, when they turned across to that part of the bank they supposed to be nearest to the cave. Not finding a landing-place, they turned down the stream towards the angle made by the oblique line of shoals and the bank. They were soon rewarded by seeing one object of their search, the probable recess spoken of by Paul. As they came in view of it, Julian caught sight of a man who, the next instant, disappeared behind a large boulder. It was but a passing glance, but the figure reminded him of his father's former tenant, Stockley. The party landed and proceeded to inspect the cove. It was supported by several columns of limestone, which gave it the appearance of a porch. Its floor was a gravelly bed, and it was altogether a pleasant-looking retreat. The back of this recess was somewhat funnel-shaped, and in the deepest part of it they soon discovered a hole, a little more than a foot in diameter, which they were convinced was the outer mouth of that channel Paul had discovered within the cave. As Julian marked how the walls of the recess converged towards this aperture, and terminated in it, he could readily believe that any one talking, even within five or six feet of it, could be distinctly heard within the cavern.

After the discovery of this natural curiosity, the party proceeded to inspect the adjacent banks. They found, not far off, a fountain of cool water, bubbling up from its rocky bed. Blivins took a seat on a ledge of rock near the spring, saying that he was tired, and intended to remain there until the party was ready to return; at the same time he asked Miss Mary Colbert, supposing her to be Miss Lizzie, to take a seat with him. The rest of the party soon after left them there alone, thus giving to Blivins the opportunity for which he had been sighing all day.

"Ah! Miss Lizzie," he began, "I am very tired; have hardly recovered from the violent exercise which that infer—excuse me—that vicious horse gave me this morning. On the whole, however, was I not making a very good race of it? Paul, it is true, saw fit to check my rapid course, but that was because my horse was trotting, which is, I must say, a damn

—pardon me again, I entreat—which is, I must say, a confounded unpleasant gait, to say the least of it.”

“You were doing finely,” said the young lady, laughing at the recollection of her companion’s appearance. “It was hardly fair in Mr. Paul to stop you.”

“No, it was not,” said Blivins, decidedly, “for I *was* making a capital race. Trotting, indeed! as if I did not know my horse was trotting,—as if it was not my intention to win the race in that way!”

“You and Hattie must run that race again, Mr. Blivins: I really want to see it fairly run.”

“Yes—but—nothing would, so to speak, give me so much pleasure; but I am sure, yea, confident, that Miss Hattie would decline to run with me again.”

He then hastened to change the subject before the young lady could reply. “This is refreshing, quite delectable,” he said, taking off his hat, and wiping his brow as he spoke, “after wandering through that stupid cave. *Now* am I satisfied: here could I rest forever, wanting no other companion than her now by my side. Yea, here in the umbrageous shade of this leafy foliage I could rest and be satisfied, if——”

“Miss Polly Magee were only with you,” put in the young lady.

“Ah! no,” sighed Blivins; “not her. I did once think, yea, believe, that I loved Miss Polly. It was a dream, a passing dream, a—ah—delusion. There is something here” (laying his hand upon his heart) “that tells me, yea, assures me, as it were, that I have never loved before—have never loved but *one*.”

“The beautiful Miss Rosa Mundy, that was, I suppose?” said the girl, provokingly.

“No, no,” said Blivins, now straightening himself up, and assuming a more sentimental tone and attitude; “that was another dream, another delusion. I have, in truth, loved but *one*; there is but *one* form and face stereotyped on the unblotted page and tablet of my heart. And this image is to remain there forever; nothing can cancel it, nothing can erase it, yea, nothing can—ah—hem—blot it out. It is——”

“Are not my sister and myself very much alike?” asked his companion, again interrupting him. He was a little dis-

concerted by the question, but answered, after a moment's hesitation,—

"There is a resemblance, quite a close resemblance, but I have found not the slightest difficulty in distinguishing you. Your sister is, indeed, pretty, quite a lovely girl; but how can I ever mistake her for yourself, when it is *your* image which is indelibly and ineffaceably impressed upon the—ah—hem—the unwritten page of my inmost soul?"

The girl rose from her seat, and answered, heartlessly,—

"But this very mistake you *have* made, Mr. Blivins, for you are now talking to Mary Colbert instead of to Lizzie."

Julian and Lizzie approached them at that instant, but they were not seen by Blivins in his embarrassment. Springing to his feet, and facing the girl, he stammered out,—

"What, you do not mean to tell me, Miss Lizzie, that you are Miss Mary? That I mustn't believe my own eyes? Oh, no, no, you're only trying to deceive me—trying to play a joke on me."

"Here are my sister and Mr. Julian, who will tell you whether I am Mary or Lizzie," answered the girl, now blushing as well as laughing.

It was now Blivins's turn to blush as he became aware of the presence of the other two. As he heard them both affirm that it was Miss Mary with whom he had been talking, he started back, exclaiming,—

"Miss Mary! why, demni—pardon, ladies—but—but—demn my eyes—pardon me again I entreat, I'm a little confused—but I see now"—with a poor attempt at a laugh—"ha, ha, I see now my mistake. You *are* something alike; yea, you are, as it were, very much alike. These glasses *will* get dusty at times;" saying which he took them off, and wiped them with his handkerchief. This slight mistake served to dampen his spirits for the rest of the evening. It was noticed that he avoided speaking to the Misses Colbert as much as possible, but that when he did speak to one of them he was careful not to address her by name.

It was now the hour of sunset, and time for the party to return. The clouds which had overspread the sky in the early part of the afternoon had gradually thickened, and were now threatening rain. By the time they had reached their boats the falling drops warned them to seek shelter in the recess

already described. The shower proved to be a heavy one; but the party was completely sheltered by the overhanging cliff. When it ceased, the boats had to be baled of the water which had fallen into them. By the time this was done night had come on, the darkness of which was increased by the presence of the clouds. The scene, however, was constantly illuminated, though only for a second at a time, by the lightning, which still flashed among the exhausted clouds.

While Julian was assisting the young ladies into the skiff, Hattie stepped into the bateau, in order to pass from it into the larger boat. As she did so, she loosened the prow of the bateau from where it was resting on the sand. She felt it move away from the bank, but believing it to be secured to the skiff by its other end, she thought nothing of it, and sat down on one of its seats, intending to wait there until Julian could help her into the larger boat. But, startled presently to find that the bateau was still moving with her, and that she had floated off to too great a distance from the skiff, she started up, calling to Julian for help. At that moment, a flash of lightning revealed to the eyes of all the receding bateau, and Hattie standing in it, with her arms stretched out towards them. The danger of her position was apparent to all, knowing, as they did, the proximity of the shoals, which would certainly overturn, or break in pieces, any boat thrown upon them. As Bertha's startled cry arose Julian plunged into the water, and, with rapid and vigorous strokes, began to swim after the bateau; but, encumbered as he was by his clothing, none of which he had taken the time to throw off, he knew that he was not gaining as rapidly on it as was necessary to enable him to reach it before it got within the influence of the rapids. Kennon, having thrown off his coat and his shoes, likewise plunged in, but from a point lower down; while Colbert went still lower, with the intention of going out on the shoals, where, if he could get there in time, he might intercept the boat should it fail to be overtaken by the others. Julian and Kennon were about equally distant from the bateau, but were swimming towards it from different directions. They soon became aware of the impossibility of overtaking it before it reached the rocks, yet they did not relax their efforts. Colbert's attempt was still more vain; to go among those rocks was a hazardous undertaking at any time; to do so in the darkness of that night was

impossible. Another flash of lightning revealed to the eager eyes of those in the skiff, and the three men struggling in the water, not one but two bateaux, and standing, apparently, on the edge of the dreaded shoals. They saw, too, by the same flash, the figure of a man standing in the strange boat, and in the act of lifting Hattie from the other one. Again all was dark; the swimmers had been arrested by the strange vision, and nought was heard save the rolling of the waters over the rocks.

Presently, Julian heard the dip of a paddle in the water not far off, and then saw the outlines of a boat approaching him. When it drew near a gruff voice came from it, saying,—

“The chile is safe—the boat had to go.”

Julian, raising himself in the water, shouted the glad news; then drawing himself into the stranger's boat, he clasped the child almost fiercely in his arms, and kissed her. Another flash revealed Kennon near by the boat, and John Colbert out among the rocks apparently, but making his way to the shore.

“Take hold the side o’ the boat, and I’ll gi’ ye a lift,” said the stranger to Kennon. The latter did so, and was soon brought with the bateau to the bank.

As soon as Julian had handed Hattie out, he turned to her preserver and said,—

“Julian Marable would like to know the name of the brave man who, at so much risk to himself, has just saved the life of his sister?”

“It matters not,” answered the man, in a low tone. “He knows you and her, and wants no thanks, nor pay.”

Immediately afterwards he pushed his boat off, and was seen no more.

When Julian handed Hattie into the skiff, Bertha drew her to her breast and held her there, weeping tears of joy over her. After waiting a few moments for Colbert to join them, the party set out on its return. The moon, breaking through the clouds soon after, lighted them on their way back.

Mr. and Mrs. Marable were deeply moved when they learned the particulars of Hattie's narrow escape. It was very evident that this child, who had come to them homeless and nameless, was never to be again, though her parents might never be discovered, either homeless or nameless; that she was, in very truth, *one* of the Marable family.

The next morning the Colberts returned home, accompanied by Blivins. For some reason the latter gentleman did not protract his visit to his new friends. And for some reason, equally good, he was never known to voluntarily speak of it to others. His love-affair with the pretty Miss Lizzie, owing to his inability to distinguish between her and her sister, was particularly noted for the shortness of its duration. The day after the Colberts left, Kennon Macdermot closed his first visit to Innisfel.

CHAPTER XXII.

PAUL FOLLOWS MENNIE.

WHEN Paul, after parting from his friends on the river, reached Innisfel, he called together his father and mother, and, telling them what he had so strangely heard, expressed the intention of following the misguided girl—of following her as a brother would follow a sister, in the hope of yet saving her from the fate she so recklessly braved. The mother was the first to speak.

"Yes, go, my dear Paul," she said, "and may God go with you, and enable you to bring back the poor child!"

Mr. Marable, before making any reply, counted into the hands of his son what funds he thought would be necessary to defray all his expenses. He then said,—

"You are young, Paul, to undertake this pursuit, but I have great confidence in your good sense and prudence. Yes," he continued, his eyes flashing with indignation, "I say go, and turn not back until you find the girl and rescue her from her betrayer. That the man intends to deceive her, is evident from the words you heard in the cave."

Paul, his preparations being completed, mounted his horse, and in twenty minutes was in Rome. He went first to Will Duke's place of business.

Duke had prospered of late years, and was now a partner in the house which he had at first entered as clerk. Paul found him alone, in a small office in the rear of his storehouse, and which opened on a side street. No sooner had the two young men shaken hands than a woman's head, closely veiled, looked in at the door, and, in an uncertain voice, asked to see Mr. Duke. The latter going to the door, and seeing who was there, said, in a tone which expressed some surprise,—

"Is this Miss Rabie? Has anything happened? if so, come in, and tell us what it is. This is no stranger here, but your old friend, Paul Marable."

As soon as Will ceased speaking she came in quickly, and shut the door behind her. Then, throwing back her veil, she turned her dark eyes, now full of trouble, from one to the other of the two young men, saying only, "She is gone!"

A hard expression came into Will's face. "Tell us when, and how," he briefly said.

"On the twelve o'clock train," answered the girl. "I found, only a few minutes ago, on my bureau, a note addressed to me, in Mennie's handwriting; it only said, 'Good-by, Rabie. I have left Rome with Mr. Winter, and will, in a few hours, be his wife. Tell the others good-by for me, and don't grieve for your sister.'"

"Hear me, Rabie, and Will," said Paul, making an effort to speak calmly. "I heard this several hours ago, and while some miles up the river. How I heard it I have not time now to tell you, but I started off at once, and am here with the intention of following Mennie, and of bringing her back, if possible."

A gleam of hope came into Rabie's dark face, and speaking in quick, eager tones, she said,—

"You will go for her? Oh, Paul! I was thinking there was none to go. Father would know neither where to go, nor what to do; how could he, when he knows nothing but books? I forgot I once had a brother. No, I never forgot it,—that was impossible, after what you so lately did for Mennie; but I had no right to expect you to do this."

"Shall I go with you, Paul?" asked Will Duke.

"It was to ask you to do so that I am here."

"Then I shall certainly go."

"Oh, thank you, Will!" said the girl. "You have always been a friend, but this is more than I could have asked you to do." She then leaned her head upon the table near her to hide the tears which she could no longer repress.

"Have you any idea of the route they've taken?" asked Will.

"Yes; but I will tell it to you at another time. Our train leaves in an hour, so, if you have any preparations to make, you have no time to lose."

Duke acted immediately on this suggestion, and left them. Paul then turned to the still weeping girl, and said, "Come, Rabie; it is getting dark. I will go with you a part of the way home."

She drew her veil over her face, and went with him. He stopped when in sight of the familiar red house, and, after telling her to do all she could to comfort her father, to be hopeful herself, and to make him hopeful, he bade her good-by.

An hour afterwards he was on the train with Will Duke, speeding towards Kingston, the place where the Rome railroad meets the one connecting Chattanooga with Atlanta. Paul lost no time in giving his companion all the information he had learned in the cave. When he mentioned George Brenham as the one whom Julian supposed the unknown man possessing the information to be, Duke said that he knew the man: that he came to Rome every year, staying only two or three weeks at a time; that he was known to but a few, as he never appeared on the streets in the day, and to these few he was known as a gambler.

Having satisfied themselves that Brenham was not on the Rome train, they determined to look out for him at Kingston, it being likely that he would come to the latter place to take the cars, as it was nearer to Armuchee Cave than was Rome. On reaching Kingston, they exchanged cars. Almost immediately after taking their seats they were much encouraged to see enter the same car in which they were the man whom they were looking for, George Brenham. Firmly persuaded now that Julian was right, and that they saw before them the man who knew where Ned Winter was going, and who, they had reason to believe, was following him, they determined not to lose sight of him, and yet to be careful not to let him suspect them of watching him. Noticing that he paid to Atlanta, they saw him stretch himself on two seats, and, apparently, go to sleep.

Owing to an accident which delayed them two hours, they failed to make connection in Atlanta with either the Augusta or the Macon train. This delay gave them the opportunity of examining the registers of the different hotels in the city. Learning nothing from this examination, they took the next train for Augusta, which left at eight o'clock in the morning, having first seen that Brenham had purchased a ticket for the same place. Arriving in Augusta a couple of hours before the train for Savannah would leave, they went to the different hotels to examine their registers, as they had done in Atlanta. At one of these, situated not far from the Savannah depot,

Paul found, written in a familiar hand, two names, registered as follows :

"N. W. Slocum and sister, Ga."

"Rich Houghton, Savannah."

Calling the clerk to him, and putting his finger on the first name, he asked,—

"Do you know this man?"

"Never saw him before this morning, sir," replied the clerk. And then leaning over the counter, and resting his elbows upon it, he asked, in a half whisper, "Is anything wrong?"

"The handwriting is familiar," replied Paul, evasively, "but I do not know any one by the name of Slocum."

"Ah! you think, then, that the name is fictitious?" queried the clerk, assuming quite a confidential manner. He then proceeded to give a description of the man calling himself Slocum, from which description Paul and Duke were convinced that he was no other than Ned Winter. It being their object, however, to obtain all the information possible, without giving any in return, they did not let the man know that they recognized the party by his description.

"Slocum, Slocum," repeated Paul slowly to himself, as though he might have been mistaken in saying that he knew no one with that name. Then turning to the man, he asked, "Did you see the sister?"

"I noticed her as they were going off," he replied. "She had a troubled, half frightened look, and acted very much like one who went against her will. I must say, sir, that the lady is in bad company. The man Slocum has the hardest face I think I ever saw; and this man," putting his finger on Houghton's name as he spoke, "who visits our city occasionally, is known as a drinking, dare-devil sort of a man."

"Did Houghton go with them?" asked Paul.

"He did, at least from here."

"I presume they have left the city," continued Paul; "and I have some curiosity to know, if you can tell me, by what train they left?"

"They took the Savannah train, I suppose, sir; I heard Slocum ask when it would leave." The man uttered this in his usual business tone, and with an air as if he regretted having given away so much of his valuable time.

Paul and his companion, to quiet any suspicion that might have arisen in the mind of the clerk that they were in pursuit of the parties they had questioned him about, after lingering for a few minutes in front of the hotel, went away in a direction opposite to that which led to the Savannah depot. At the end of the next half-hour, however, they took their seats in the night passenger train for Savannah, and with the knowledge that George Brenham was still their fellow-passenger.

As the pursuers were leaving Augusta the pursued were entering the city of Savannah.

The farther Mennie got from home the more she repented the step she had taken. She had thought that she and Ned were to be married on their arriving in Kingston; Ned had told her that they would be. On reaching Kingston, however, he gave some reason why it had better take place in Atlanta. Arrived in the latter place, he pretended to have received a telegraphic despatch from a friend he had left in Rome, stating that Mr. Briggs had started in pursuit of them, and thus he persuaded her that it was best for them to go on to Augusta. On reaching the latter place early in the morning, they went to the hotel already spoken of as being near to the Savannah depot. While waiting for breakfast, Ned left Mennie alone in the ladies' parlor; in a short time he returned, bringing with him Rich Houghton, whom he introduced to Mennie as an old college friend.

"He will go on with us to Savannah," added Ned, carelessly.

"To Savannah?" said the girl, looking up in surprise.

"Ah, yes! I find it will be best to carry out our original plan, and go on to Savannah. My aunt there will, I know, give us a warm welcome. Houghton here will go with us, and be present at our marriage."

Mennie did not at all like this sudden and unexpected change which would take them to Savannah; nor did she like the cool manner in which she had been informed of it. Many things had transpired since she had abandoned her home to make her suspect the man into whose hands she had entrusted her all. Besides the several changes which postponed their marriage, she noticed that the farther they left Rome behind them the less attention he paid to her feelings or wishes. The fact, too, which she had learned by accident, that he was

travelling under a false name, served to increase her uneasiness. Even before Augusta was reached, a vague fear had begun to take possession of her. When, therefore, she learned that they were to go to Savannah, being a girl of spirit as well as of quick perception, she would have rebelled, and have asked to be taken back to Rome, had it not been for the presence of Rich Houghton. Though by her silence she acquiesced in the arrangement, yet it was evident to the two men that her acquiescence was forced. Nor did Mennie anticipate any pleasure from the addition of Houghton to their company; on the contrary, there was something in his cynical and sensual face from which she shrank. She had shrunk, too, yet unconsciously, from Ned's mention of their expected marriage. This shrinking on her part did not escape the keen eyes of Rich Houghton as he fastened them upon her troubled, yet still pretty face, where he kept them until she, blushing with anger, drew her veil before it. Ned saw the rude stare, but showed no resentment at it.

On reaching Savannah they stopped at one of the principal hotels in the city. Here Mennie was to remain only that night, Ned saying that he would take her the next day to his aunt's. After supper, Ned expressed the intention of going out to acquaint his aunt with their arrival, as she would doubtless wish to make some preparation for their reception. Before going he followed Mennie to the door of her room, at which they stopped, and he, leaning against its facing, thus spoke,—

"We have now begun life in earnest, Mennie. For your former friends, now more than three hundred miles away, you have taken me, for better or for worse. I did not think when I asked you to be my wife that you would ever regret it, nor do I think so now. You are weary to-night, worn out with travelling; to-morrow I will expect to see you yourself again, my own fair Lydia, fairer than Grecian Helen, or the blue-eyed Queen of the Nile. Look upon the life that is before us, the life that we have looked forward to for years; it is free, it is fair, it is full of pleasure. We must be bold enough to enter it, to enjoy it; bold enough to rise above the forms of the past conventional life, to put away its rigid laws and harsh restraints. What have we to do with them? why should they cumber our free steps?"

"I don't believe I understand you, Ned," said the girl, with a puzzled look.

"Hardly yet," he answered; "but it will not be long before you do understand me. All that I want now is that you be cheerful, that you be yourself again. Remember that we have pledged each other our love, and that these pledges make us man and wife. In the sight of heaven and the eyes of all honest men, we are now man and wife. Think upon these things. Dream of to-morrow's pleasures. What business have we with cares? And now good-night."

"Good-night," was all her reply, spoken in a low tone, and in a tone expressive of doubt and weariness. She entered her room, and, locking the door, threw herself across the bed.

Ten minutes later a tap was heard at her door. Going to it, and asking who was there, a girl's voice replied, "I have a note for you." On her opening the door, a servant-girl handed her a note, written in a strange hand, and which read as follows:

"MISS M. B.—If you are satisfied with your present position and prospects, burn this note; but if you are not, follow its bearer to the ladies' parlor, where there awaits you one anxious to assist you, one who will prove indeed

"A FRIEND."

Poor child! She had found out ere this how much, how very much, she stood in need of a friend. At the thought of succor, which the note for one moment brought to her mind, her heart beat fast, and her first impulse was to fly to answer it. But this impulse was momentary, for, the next instant, she asked herself why should a friend conceal his name? She stopped to think about it, and the flush which the sudden hope had brought to her cheeks died out as she thought how very improbable it was that any friend of hers should be waiting for her in the ladies' parlor. Even had any of her friends in Rome been disposed to follow her, she thought they had no clue to the direction she had gone. A fleeting thought of Paul Marable passed through her mind; it was fleeting because she was sure it was not Paul; he would never have signed himself "A Friend;" and besides, what right had she to suppose that he would follow her? No, it was not Paul, she knew; yet the

very thought of him determined her to go and see who it was. "The halls and parlors are well lighted," she said to herself; "there can be no danger. And perhaps, perhaps, it is a friend. Whoever he may be, I will hear what he has to say."

She followed the servant-girl, who conducted her to the door of the parlor. Advancing to the middle of the room without seeing any one, she was about to retire, thinking she had been led to the wrong room, when, hearing her name called, she turned round and found herself face to face with Rich Houghton. As he was the only one in the room, she felt convinced that he was the writer of the note. She turned pale at the sight of him, for he was one whom she neither expected nor desired to see.

"I am the friend anxious to assist you," he said, with a smile he meant to be assuring, but which, despite his intention, had a devilish leer in it. "Take a seat on this sofa, Miss Mennie," he continued, pointing to a sofa near the door, from which he had risen.

"I will hear what you have to say, Mr. Houghton, standing here," answered Mennie, coldly.

Houghton looked somewhat disappointed, but continued, "You acknowledge, then, that you are *not* satisfied with the prospect before you?"

"If so—what then?"

"This—that I, Rich Houghton, would save you from the man who has brought you here, a man who has already deceived you."

"How has he deceived me?"

"He has led you to expect that he would marry you, when he has had, from the start, no intention of fulfilling that expectation."

The humiliation of her position almost crushed the unprotected girl to the floor; but she bore up, and asked, with lips that would tremble, despite her effort to control them,—

"How do you know this?"

"From his own lips."

"Well—what next?" Mennie asked this with more spirit than she had hitherto shown, for in her resentment she lost sight, for the time being, of her lonely and wretched condition. Houghton noticed it, and derived some encouragement from it to proceed.

"This next," he said. "I am anxious to save you from this man, who will be, in a few months, a penniless adventurer; and not only am I willing to do this, but I am fully able to do it. Hear me: On one of the islands on the coast of Georgia I own a large estate, in the midst of which is a beautiful villa. This villa has a fine view of the sea, and is surrounded by flower-gardens and orange-groves. The house, too, is furnished with costly furniture—yet no one lives there except servants to take care of it. Sometimes, about twice a year, I go there with a party of friends, where we stay for some weeks, having nothing to do but to enjoy ourselves. We have fruit of every kind, fine wines, music, and dancing; what more can we want? I expect to go down to-morrow to this place with some friends. We will go down on a small steamer, which I can engage to leave the wharf at any hour. If you would be free from Winter all you have to do is to claim my protection, and join our party to-morrow. We can leave at an early hour, and you need never see him again."

Mennie, although she did not comprehend all that was implied in Houghton's proposition, yet turned from it with instinctive dread; she did not consider its acceptance for a moment. But she was debating with herself whether she should ask this man, who pretended to be a friend to her, but whom she believed to be hard and selfish, to assist her in getting back to Rome. Houghton, misunderstanding her silence, went on in a manner which left her no longer undecided as to what she should do.

"You would find it a pleasant place," he said, "a lovely place. You would there have everything you could wish for, everything money could buy. You could remain there, too, as long as you pleased—you can make it your home if you will. And what do I ask for all this? Why, something, of course. I only ask that you be not cold and prudish; that you do not start and jerk away whenever I happen to touch you; and if, looking upon your pretty lips——"

"Stop! I will hear no more!" interrupted the girl, in an indignant tone, and drawing herself up proudly. "This, then, is your offer of assistance to an unprotected girl? Know that it is despised; that I have not thought for a single instant of accepting it!"

She immediately turned from him, and hurrying to her

room, again locked herself within it. She threw herself on her bed, not to sleep—she knew that was impossible—but to lament her folly, to repent in bitterness of soul her wicked rashness; to think of the remonstrances of her friends, and to weep as she thought of them; to think of the grief she had brought to her family, especially to Rabie and her father; and to think, too, of Paul Marable, and of his effort to save her from this very humiliation. She thought of him as he stood before her two weeks before, his face so expressive of tender sympathy and generous interest, as he urged her to that course which would have shielded her from this cloud of shame. Then turning her thoughts from these to the desperate circumstances which surrounded her, she tried, but vainly, to devise some means of escape from them. Thus, in lamenting her rashness and in dreading its consequences, did she pass that, to her, long, very long, night.

When Mennie left Houghton, her parting words, and the spirit with which they were uttered, took that gentleman altogether by surprise. He knew that he was acting treacherously towards Ned Winter, and that he intended to act treacherously towards Mennie, if he saw that it would be necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose. But he cared not with how many he played false, so he succeeded in his design. So great was his conceit that he had entertained little doubt of success. When, therefore, he saw his offer and himself scorned, his first emotion was surprise, which, however, very quickly gave place to resentment. He now hated the girl, and was mean and cowardly enough to do her any injury in his power to inflict. "Look out, my proud beauty," he muttered, as he turned away from the room, "you will yet repent the day that you talked thus to Rich Houghton. You would escape from Winter, I suspect, but I will help him to secure you, and then——" He finished the sentence to himself, for he had entered the crowded office. Passing through this, he joined Ned Winter in the bar-room, where the latter was awaiting his return, ignorant of what had called him off. After taking a glass of brandy at the bar, they went out, each one devilishly intent upon maturing a plan which would accomplish the ruin of the hapless girl left behind. Ned, could he have done it, would have dispensed with Houghton's help; as it was, he concluded to use him, hoping to get rid of him afterwards.

But far away were two brave men who, if they came in time, would yet snatch the prey from their grasp. They were one hundred and sixty miles away, but were coming on at the rate of twenty miles an hour. On through the moon-lighted forest, on through the sleeping village, on by the edge of the gleaming river, on through the silent fields, on through the gloom of the cypress swamps, scaring the owl and bittern from their nests, sped the iron horse towards the Forest City. Would there be no delay? Would the stout steam-engine be true to its duty? Alas! there was a delay. When the train reached Millen it had to wait there for the one from Macon. The latter was behind time; a telegram was received saying that it was delayed by a slight accident, and would be on in an hour. The hour passed, and still another, and yet the tardy train made not its appearance. The two friends paced the moon-lighted platform of the station-house, stopping at every turn to listen for the rumbling of the expected train. Paul was calm, yet his soul burned with impatience at the delay, while his companion gave vent to his restlessness by sundry fierce ejaculations. At length, after several hours' delay, the train came, and once more the friends were hastening on to save, if possible, the child of their old master.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MENNIE FOUND.

AT an early hour the next morning, and without waiting for her breakfast, Mennie Briggs went forth from the hotel, out into the streets of a strange city, to go she knew not where. She only knew that she could no longer trust the man that brought her there; that she could be no longer safe under the same roof with him and his false friend, Rich Houghton. She had been able to form no definite plan as to her course. At one time she thought of applying to a mantua-maker for work, with the hope of earning enough money to take her back to Rome; but then, as she had never been taught to do fine needle-work, she had little expectation that any dressmaker would give her employment. If she could only support herself for a few days, she then thought, until she could write to her friends and acquaint them with her condition—but the thought of writing and asking for money to return brought with it so much of humiliation that she dismissed it with a shudder, and walked on, not knowing whither she went.

She kept down Bull Street until she came to Oglethorpe Park; into this she entered, and rested a while on a rustic bench, not far from the central fountain. After wandering in the park several hours, she determined to go back into the city and apply for work at a mantua-maker's establishment she had passed while coming out. Slowly and wearily she made her way back along Bull Street. Having reached the house, she stopped without the door, afraid to enter. Then, fearing lest she would attract attention to herself by lingering too long on the street, she summoned all her resolution, and, with trembling steps, passed through the open door and into a large room, where sat eight or ten women busily sewing. She stopped, not knowing whom to address. A middle-aged woman spoke to her from behind a counter, near the door, in an affable tone.

"Can I do anything for you this morning?" she asked.

Mennie advanced to the side of the counter, and speaking in a low tone, replied, "I did not come in to make any purchases, or get any work done, but to try to get work to do."

"Ah, you wish to see the proprietress, then; you will find her yonder," pointing, as she spoke, to a small, thin, and elderly woman at the other end of the room.

Mennie went to the woman thus pointed out to her, and, waiting until she was through giving some directions to one of her young women, said, in an uncertain voice,—

"I came to see, ma'am, if you could give me any employment?"

"Employment, eh!" echoed the woman, turning her sharp gray eyes on the girl. "You are a good hand with the needle, I suppose?"

"Not very," Mennie was obliged to admit.

"Humph! how do you expect to get work?"

"I can do plain sewing," replied Mennie, "and then, I thought I might learn quite rapidly."

"Yes,—you have recommendations, of course, as to character and habits?"

"I did not know they were necessary," said the girl, in a disheartened tone. "I am a stranger in Savannah."

The woman looked at her scrutinizingly for a moment, then said, "No, I will not want you; I have as much help as I need, at present."

The disappointed girl, as she walked through the long room in front of the women at work, drew her veil over her face to hide her mortification. She went out, with no heart to make another effort. She wandered here and there through the city, avoiding the most frequented thoroughfares, vainly trying to devise some means by which she could help herself; vainly trying, because, never before having been thrown upon her own resources even for a day at a time, she had no worldly experience whatever to guide her.

Late in the afternoon, she found herself again seated in Oglethorpe Park, weary and faint from her much walking and her long fasting. Just as she had begun again, for the hundredth time, to consider the hard and terrible question where she was to spend the night, a middle-aged woman approached her, evidently, Mennie saw, with the intention of speaking to

her. She noticed that the woman was quite well dressed, and somewhat stout in person. This was all she then noticed; at another time she would, doubtless, have seen the bold look in the woman's full eye, and she would have been repelled, even if she could not have fully recognized it, by the wanton expression that sat upon her coarse face. Coming up to Mennie, with a smile on her face, she said,—

"You seem to be a stranger in our city, and quite alone. Can I help you in any way?"

"Thank you," replied Mennie, "I am a stranger here; but I know not how you, a stranger, can help me."

"Perhaps I can, if you will let me," she answered, with a bland smile. "Have you no friends in the city?"

"None," returned Mennie.

"None!" echoed the woman. She then added, "You are stopping, I suppose, at one of the hotels?"

"No; I am without money, as well as without friends."

The woman opened her puffy eyes, and tried to look sympathetic, as she said,—

"Ah! that is too bad; neither money nor friends, and far away from home, perhaps, where, judging from your appearance, I dare say you have both. It is very unfortunate, but, if you will let me, I will be a friend to you. My name is Bomar—Mrs. Bomar, and I live at 35 Pelton Street."

Mennie had not much liked the woman's appearance, but being in no condition or mood to notice her closely, and believing that she had come forward with her offer of assistance only from having seen herself wandering forlornly about the park, she caught at it as a drowning man would catch at any stray bit of rope that happened to float within his reach.

"You will help me?" she asked, now speaking eagerly, and fixing her blue eyes on those of the other. "You will help me to leave this place, to fly from the man that brought me here, and to go back to my father in Rome? Oh, Mrs. Bomar, fear not to help me; my father will return to you every cent that you let me have. Oh, will you indeed help me, and will you let me start to-night?"

"I am not able to help you as you wish," replied the woman. "All I can do for you, and that I'll do willingly, is to let you stay at my house, free of charge, until you can get money from your friends to take you back to them."

Mennie sank back, disappointed, and made no reply. Mrs. Bomar continued,—

"Come, I am anxious to help you this much. I have a cab outside the park; let us go at once, for you look to me like one very much in need of some refreshment." Seeing that Mennie still hesitated, she held out her hand as if to help her rise, and added, "I really cannot leave you here alone. Do you not see that night is fast approaching? You must come and stay at least the night with me, for you said, I believe, you had no place to go to?"

Mennie yielded to this last consideration, and, rising up languidly, tried to thank the woman for her kind offer; she then followed her out of the park, when they got into a cab, and were soon driving to a distant part of the city.

The cab stopped in front of a four-roomed cottage, having two doors opening on the small porch in front, showing that not a hall but a partition separated the two front rooms.

Mennie followed her conductress into the left-hand room. After Mrs. Bomar had lighted a lamp and offered her guest a seat, she went to a sideboard, from which she took a decanter and goblet.

"Miss Mennie," she said. The girl started at hearing her name thus spoken, as she had no recollection of having told it; nevertheless, she reflected she might have done so, for she did not remember distinctly all she had said either in the park or while in the cab. The woman saw the start, and attempted to quiet any suspicion that might have arisen in Mennie's mind, by adding, "You told me in the park, I believe, that your given name was Mennie; that is it, if I heard you aright?"

The girl nodding assent, the woman went on,—

"Well, Miss Mennie, the first thing I shall ask you to do is to drink a glass of this wine. If ever a person needed it, you do." She poured the goblet half full of the sparkling fluid, then added, "Take this, after which I will order supper to be brought in."

Mennie took the goblet in her hands, and put it to her lips. If she could only have looked back then, and seen the snake-like gleam in the eyes of the woman beside her, she would have dashed the cup away, and with a scream have fled from the house.

She drank about one-fourth of what had been poured out for her, and withdrew the cup from her lips. At that instant a voice was heard at the gate, which was close to the open door, that sent the life-blood leaping wildly through her veins. "This way, Duke!" were the words that she had heard, and in a voice that she never could forget.

There were others, too, it seemed, whom the voice startled into motion, for no sooner had Mennie heard it than she heard footsteps in the adjoining front room. These approached quickly the door in the partition between the two rooms; this door opened, and, to her amazement and terror, Ned Winter and Rich Houghton stood in the doorway; the latter in the rear, and with his evil eyes peering at her above the shoulders of the other. At the appearance of these men, the consciousness that she was betrayed flashed upon her mind, but the next second she turned her eyes to the form that sprang through the front door, and which stopped, erect, in the centre of the room. The goblet dropped from Mennie's uplifted hand, and with a wild cry of "Oh, save me, Paul!" she sprang towards him, and fell fainting into his arms. Immediately afterwards, Will Duke entered, and placed himself by Paul's side.

"Come, gentlemen, this is rather cool," said Ned, advancing into the room. "'Pon my honor, you are taking very much upon yourselves, to thus come between a man and his wife."

"Your wife!" sneered Duke. "It's an infamous lie! Do we not know that she left the hotel to escape from you? Do we not know something of the vile plot you and this base scoundrel, your companion, made to recover her?"

"Who is the man that dares call Rich Houghton a base scoundrel?" said that individual, stepping forward, and drawing a pistol from his pocket.

"I am the man that dares to do it," answered Duke, producing a similar weapon, and stepping up so quickly in front of Houghton that the latter recoiled a step or two. Paul, seeing the drawn pistols, and knowing that a difficulty in which pistols were used would bring the affair before the public, which was the last thing he desired, determined to prevent it, if possible. Gently letting Mennie to the floor, he stepped beside his friend. Standing erect, and with eyes no longer calm, but flashing with indignation, he looked from one to the other of the two miscreants before him. Presently

his lips began to curl with scorn, as he still looked from one to the other of the two men, now commencing to grow irresolute before him. Then speaking, slowly at first, he began,—

“’Pon *your* honor, we are acting rather coolly, are we? *Your* honor—ha, ha, ha!—that honor which does not scruple to deceive an inexperienced girl; that does not hesitate to bring disgrace and pain upon a family from whom you have received only kindness; that unsullied honor which has led its possessor, in conjunction with a miserable dastard and a vile procuress, to plot the destruction of an unprotected girl. *Your* honor; ha, ha, ha! Hear me, Ned Winter, and you, Rich Houghton, hear me, ye shabby poltroons, if either of you ever again attempt to interfere with the young lady lying there, I will stamp upon you as I would upon vile worms of the dust!”

The dauntless eye and mien of Paul had cowed at the outset the two men. Advancing towards them as he spoke, they gradually fell back before the fierce flashings of his eye and the withering scorn of his words, until, by the time he had ceased, they were both within the other room.

Paul and his friend then turning to Mennie, lifted her up, and bore her to a cab they had in waiting. They ordered the cabman to drive to the hotel which Mennie had left that morning; but, on her showing signs of returning consciousness, they ordered her baggage, on their reaching the hotel, sent to the Central depot, whither they also went, knowing that a train would leave for Macon in the course of an hour. They determined to return by Macon, not only because it was a shorter route, but they thought it would be pleasanter for Mennie not to go back by the way she had come. The open air, and the motion of the cab, had the effect to restore Mennie to consciousness before they reached the depot. She started up a little wildly, and asked,—

“Where am I?”

“With friends now, Mennie, who are taking you home; your old friends, Will Duke and Paul.”

“And those men will not follow us—will not trouble me any more?” she asked, hardly comprehending yet where she was.

“No, no,” answered Paul; “they have no thought of following us; they dare not trouble you again.”

"Oh, Paul!" murmured the girl, after a little pause, "what must you think of me, you and Will, and the folks at home?"

"We think that you have been wronged, Mennie, and the folks at home will be, as we are, glad to get you back."

"Can this be?" she murmured, as if to herself. "It will be so much more than I deserve." And then, after another short pause, she added, "Oh, Paul, I have suffered so much; I want to tell you and Will all about it."

"Yes, Mennie," he answered, "but you must wait until you get some rest."

Arrived at the depot, the young men took Mennie into an eating-saloon, where the three sat down around one table. The two men, having eaten nothing since morning, did justice to the excellent supper they had brought to them; but Mennie ate lightly, although she had eaten nothing all day. What she did eat, however, and the cup of coffee she drank, served to strengthen her, and to revive, in some degree, her spirits. This was manifested by the interest she began to show in her personal appearance. Being naturally neat and tasteful in arranging her dress and toilet, she could not be long untidy without becoming conscious of it. This made her think of her trunk, which she supposed still at the hotel.

"Paul," she said, "I had a trunk at the hotel; I forgot to tell you."

"But we did not forget to stop and get it as we came on. We reached the hotel while you were still unconscious."

"I am very glad of it," she replied; "and if it will not give you too much trouble, I would like to get at it, and in some place where I can have the benefit of a mirror, if there is such a place close by—I feel so untidy."

"Pardon me for not thinking of it sooner," answered Paul. "You will find everything you need in the ladies' saloon, under the car-shed, where I will have your trunk sent at once."

She went away, and when she came back, a half-hour afterwards, she was looking something like the Mennie of old. Her face was pale, and wore a sad expression, but it was not the troubled look Paul and Julian had noticed before her flight with Winter; that was gone, Paul was glad to see, and the sad expression which was there now would not be lasting, he hoped.

After they were seated in the cars, Mennie complained of sleepiness. Since she had first opened her eyes in the cab, she said, it had been a constant task to keep them open. Her two friends interchanged glances, showing that they had heard something they had expected to hear; but they kept silent, thinking it would be pleasanter for her never to know all the horror that lurked in Mrs. Bomar's goblet of wine. They were convinced that she had drank but a small part of it, not enough to injure her. Its only effect was, as they expected, to make her sleep soundly from Savannah to Macon.

The train entered Macon the next morning just as the sun was rising. It was Sunday, and at that early hour everything appeared so calm and still, and was so suggestive of rest, that which man needs at times more than all else, that Paul proposed to spend the day in Macon. Not alone for the sake of the rest they needed, but he hoped that it would be spent in such a manner that Mennie would be better prepared for the trying ordeal which awaited her in meeting her friends in Rome. Besides, it would give him time to write, and let them prepare to meet her; he wanted to write also a short letter to Julian, that he might meet him in Rome.

They stopped at the Brown House, near to the passenger depot. After breakfast, Paul duly wrote his letters, and sent them off by the nine o'clock train.

At eleven o'clock they attended together divine service at one of the churches of the city. The music, harmonious and plaintive, withdrew the listening soul away from the cares of life, from the weight of its toils and its griefs, or, it may be, in the heart of him whose eyes were still turned inflexibly earthward, it touched a chord which awakened a new impulse, vague, perhaps, perhaps momentary, that made him look up and wonder if there was indeed a life higher than his own. The discourse was practical, and delivered with much earnestness. Mennie listened as she had never before listened to a sermon. The theme was an old, old one. She had heard all her life of the goodness of God and the love of Christ, but she had never stopped to think of the one, nor to be moved by the other.

That God is good, and that his tender mercies are over all his works, were truths that she had heard until they had become trite, or had ceased to have to her any meaning. But

she now felt that He was good to her; that, unworthy as she was, and eager to wander from Him as she had been, He would yet have her to follow after Him, as He was revealed to her in the person of his son; would have her to turn from the evil of her past life, from its frivolity and emptiness, and seek to make it beautiful and noble by fashioning it after the pattern of that life which alone is without fault or blemish.

Could she do this? could she ever hope to do it? This was the question she asked herself as the words of the preacher ceased. "Ah, no," she thought, "not now, not now. There was a time once, perhaps, when I might have done it, but now——" Looking up, she met the eyes of Paul looking upon her, and there was in them such a calm and hopeful look that the dismal thought was checked; and then turning aside her face, a wondering expression came into it, and her eyes seemed to be looking afar off, as if to distant hills that were not all sombre.

Late in the afternoon they took a stroll through the city, visiting the beautiful Rose Hill Cemetery, situated on the bank of the Ocmulgee River. It was here, in a quiet place, that Mennie told to her two friends all the particulars of her flight with Winter. She told it simply, admitting her folly in the outset, nor attempting afterwards to justify herself. Her story showed how there had been gradually formed in her mind a vague dread of the man to whom she had entrusted herself; and how, during the night she spent in Savannah, this suspicion of intended evil was developed into a certainty. Thus it was that she had left the hotel early in the morning, and had spent the day wandering through the streets and parks.

When she concluded, Paul briefly told how Will and himself had followed her. He dwelt purposely on the tender interest manifested by Rabie, at which Mennie could not restrain her tears. He then spoke of what they had learned in Augusta from the clerk of the hotel, and then of the vexatious delay at Millen, which caused them to reach Savannah three hours behind time. His account of the manner in which they found her was as follows:

"After examining in vain three hotel registers, we found in the fourth the same names we had seen in Augusta. Showing the clerk these names and asking if they were in the house, he answered in a confidential manner that the young lady had

left early in the morning, no one knowing where she had gone; that Mr. Slocum looked worried when told of it, and after explaining that the young lady, his sister, was subject to fits of mental aberration, asked that nothing be said about it, he preferring to find her himself, though it took him longer to do it, than to have any noise or excitement raised about it. I was not sorry, Mennie, at the clerk's information; on the contrary, I rejoiced to hear it, for it showed me that you had come to see Ned in his true character, and convinced me that we had not come too late. I was only sorry that we had not come in time to intercept you as you left the hotel, which we would have done had it not been for the delay in Millen. After our talk with the clerk we agreed that Will should keep his eye upon Brenham, while I should scour the city in search of you. We were to meet at the hotel, at two o'clock, to compare notes, unless you were found before that time. Hiring a cab, I went through the city in every direction, now and then stopping to make inquiries, when I thought it could be done without exciting comment. I went through the various parks, down by the river, and through the suburbs, but could see or hear nothing of you. In the mean time Will had kept Brenham in sight. About one o'clock the latter left the hotel, Will following him at a distance. He saw him, at length, enter at 35 Pelton Street. Drawing quite near to the house, which the shrubbery around it enabled him to do with little danger of being noticed by those within, he saw, after standing there awhile, Ned Winter and a woman come out on the front porch. They stood there for a few minutes talking, but in too low a tone for him to hear any words they said. One glance into the woman's face was enough to convince Will of her vile character. As Ned went down the steps, the woman following him said, in a louder tone, 'If she is there, I'll bring her.' 'Of course you will,' replied Ned. 'You may look for me again a little before sundown. Be prepared for my coming.' Ned then getting into a cab, rode off the other way. Will, whom the shrubbery had screened from the observation of both Ned and the woman, as soon as the latter re-entered the house, attempted to follow the cab; but quickly losing sight of it, he came on to the hotel to have the appointed meeting with me at two o'clock. Both of us being confident that Ned and the woman were talking of you, we determined to watch that house

through the remainder of the afternoon. We did so, taking our stations on either side, and at some distance from it, that we might not appear to be watching it. A short time after taking my position I saw Rich Houghton coming towards me. I moved out of his way before he could recognize me, and then saw him go on and enter the house we were watching. Late in the afternoon, Ned drove up to the house in a cab; the woman immediately joined him, and the two went off together. In a half-hour Ned returned, walking, and a little while after, I saw a cab standing before the door, from which two women were alighting. It had approached by a street different from the one we were watching. Confident now of my course, I went towards the house. Meeting the cabman who had brought you, I turned him back to await at the place he had just left. At the gate I called to Will; he had already started, but I did not at first see him, so great was my hurry. You know the rest."

"I know enough," said Mennie, shuddering at the recollection of the scene Paul's words had called up. "I know that I was saved from those wicked men and that horrid woman. If there is anything you have not told me, I am satisfied beforehand with your reasons for not telling it."

"There is not much more to tell. Before we could carry you from the house, the two men made some show of resisting our interference; but this Will and I were in no mood at all to endure."

That evening, until late, the three sat on the balcony, upon which the parlor of their hotel opened, enjoying the balmy summer air and the pleasant moonlight. The young men exerted themselves to make the girl forget her troubles; this was impossible, yet she seemed at times to have forgotten them, to have become, but with a change for the better, the same merry, happy child that she used to be. Just before they separated for the night, she said,—

"Would you believe it, Paul, and you, Will, I have been almost happy to-night. Yes, happier than I have been in—months."

They started for Rome the next morning at an early hour, and arrived there just at nightfall. Rabie met her sister at the depot, and they walked together, hand in hand, towards their father's house. Julian had come to the depot with a

buggy to take his brother out to Innisfel; but Paul, having promised Mennie that he would tell to her father everything before he left her, left Julian with Will Duke, and went on after the sisters.

The meeting between Mennie and her parents and sisters was, at the same time, a sad and joyful one. The younger children, knowing nothing more than that she had been absent for a few days, received her with open joy. Mrs. Briggs was more subdued than she ever was before. She looked as if she wanted to laugh over it, yet could not do it for crying. She praised and faintly scolded, all in the same breath; but her greeting, strange as it was, showed that her maternal affection had been excited at last to a degree where it could be seen. The meeting between the father and child was more affecting. He tried to be calm, but could not keep back his tears. As she approached him, she looked up timidly into his face, and seeing there the tears, and that he had forgiven her, she bowed her head and murmured, "Oh, my father!"

Clasping her in his arms, he kissed her more tenderly than he had ever done before.

"Oh, my poor child!" he said; "my poor Mennie, it is I who have done wrong, I who ought to ask you to forgive me, —to forgive me for not having shown you more love, for not having tried to make your home more pleasant to you."

"Don't, father," said the girl, weeping, "don't accuse yourself. I cannot bear it. Oh, no, it is I, only my own wicked self, who am to blame."

"Never mind, my Mennie, we will have no accusations; we will only thank God that you are with us again."

Then turning to Paul, and laying his hand upon his shoulder, he continued,—

"And it is to you, Paul Marable, that I am indebted for the safe return of my child. To you, to that pupil for whose coming I used to watch, for his entrance into my school-room always seemed to be followed by rays of cheerful sunlight. And now, when a cloud had fallen upon my house, threatening it with night, he comes forward, and, breaking through the cloud, shows us again the bright sky beyond, still ready to shine upon us!"

"He and another old pupil, Mr. Briggs," said Paul.

"Yes, yes," resumed the old man, "we should not forget

William, who has shown that he has a kind heart, and is a friend, indeed. William was never much of a student, and was rather rude as a boy, but he has changed much, especially in this last respect. He is now, they say, one of our most steady and successful young men, and that he is also true and brave, Oliver Briggs will always believe. But, pardon me, Paul, you are waiting, no doubt, to speak to me alone. Come with me into my study."

Paul followed him into his study, and then told him all the particulars of Mennie's flight, just as she had told them to him. Then he told of the terrible danger which threatened her, and how it was averted by the timely arrival of Will Duke and himself. The old man shuddered at the picture of the outrage designed against his child, and again devoutly thanked God for her deliverance. At the conclusion of his story, Paul spoke of the genuineness of Mennie's grief and repentance in such terms as to suggest that the father need have no fear for his child in the future; that she would prove in every way worthy of his confidence.

Soon afterwards, Paul rejoined Julian, when the two drove rapidly out to Innisfel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON THE ATLANTIC.

It was a clear day in the early part of October. The scene was the deck of a steamer, in mid-ocean between New York and Liverpool. The time was the hour of sunset.

The deck of the steamer was crowded with human beings. These were, for the most part, divided into groups; yet here and there could be seen a solitary individual, standing, and sometimes walking, silently, apart from the rest, seemingly without acquaintance or friend on board.

Julian and Paul Marable were two of a group of five which had a position towards the stern of the vessel.

One of this group was a young man about a year older than Julian. He was tall, firmly built, with light hair and blue eyes. Like Julian and Paul, he was on his way to the University of Berlin, where he intended to pursue the study of the languages, both ancient and modern; it was also his intention, as it was theirs, to make the tour of Europe before returning to America. Malcolm Hillhouse, for such was the young man's name, was born and had lived, for the most part, at his father's country residence on Long Island.

The other persons of the group were ladies. One of them, an elderly maiden lady, was introduced to the Marable brothers as Miss Herard. She was small in stature, thin, and with pale, sharp features. Her face was expressionless, and showed no sympathy with what was passing around her. She seldom spoke, and then with as few words as possible.

Miss Flora Blanchard, the young lady of the group, was the niece of the lady just described, and the step-sister of Malcolm Hillhouse. Miss Flora, although only sixteen years of age, had left her boarding-school a year before, having concluded then that she could endure no longer its restraints upon her liberty. Before that time, while she was in her fifteenth year, she had, in company with her aunt, visited several coun-

tries of Europe, and since then, during the past year, she had visited many places of interest to the tourist in her own country. She was a brunette, with a small and round figure. In looking into Miss Flora's attractive and picturesque face, into her large, dark-brown eyes, it was not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that the young lady had been used to having her own way, that hitherto she had found little opposition to her own will. But, despite the pride and self-will which a study of her face might have revealed, its beauty was, nevertheless, striking and attractive. Her movements were graceful and her manner self-possessed. Her conversation, which was animated, showed a quick mind, and that she had read much; yet it showed, too, that her reading had been desultory. She had received musical instruction, both instrumental and vocal, from the best masters in America, since she was eight years old, yet owing to her dislike for continuous or systematic labor, her proficiency was by no means what it should have been. This was the case, too, when she possessed both a soul and an ear for music. One object of her present visit to Europe was to prosecute her musical studies; she would do this in one of the German cities. She, like her aunt, was dressed in black, which color served to heighten the effect of the magnificent and artistic jewelry she wore.

Flora's mother, who was a Louisianian, had died soon after her marriage with Malcolm's father, and while Flora was yet a small child. After her mother's death she was resigned to the care of Miss Herard, her mother's sister, who, putting her into a boarding-school as soon as she was eight years old, kept her there until she was fifteen. This school was in the State of New York, but Flora had spent her winters with her aunt in New Orleans. While this arrangement lasted, Malcolm had seen nothing of his step-sister. She left his father's house ten years before, when she was six years old, nor did he see her again until a few months ago, when they met at Saratoga.

On the first day of their voyage Julian and Paul had become acquainted with Hillhouse and the two ladies. The young men at once recognized in each other congenial spirits, and a friendship commenced to grow between them which had the promise of being enduring because based on the foundation of kindred merits mutually perceived. They were alike in love with culture; with all that expands, elevates, or ennobles the

human intellect. Hillhouse did not long conceal the fact that he was an unbeliever in Christianity. He was more open than Julian in his avowal of unbelief, for he boldly and unequivocally professed himself a deist when the subject of religion was first introduced among them. He appeared to be well informed on his side of the question, quoting with fluency from such writers as Herbert, Bolingbroke, Hobbes, and Collins. During the discussion which these young men sometimes had on these subjects, Flora was, for the most part, a silent listener; but when she did speak it would be to make some light remark, which showed her to be in sympathy with the opinions of Hillhouse and Julian.

"What need have we for any further revelation than that we find in nature?" asked Hillhouse, on that October evening, as the five sat together on the deck of the vessel. "Does it not teach us that there is a God; that there is good and evil, virtue and vice, life and death? And does it not teach us, too, that virtue is rewarded and vice punished—at least in this present life? Christianity, Judaism, Mahometanism, Buddhism, and all other pretended revelations come to me with too many mysteries."

"If God," said Julian, pursuing the subject, "wished to give to man a revelation of his will, would He not have given it to him in such a compact, clear, and direct manner as would leave no doubt as to its authenticity, even to the latest generation? Whereas, the authenticity of nearly every book in the Bible has been, at one time or another, questioned. It seems that several hundred years elapsed after Christ before it could be settled what was Scripture; whether this Gospel was to be stricken out, or that Epistle admitted. Besides, why was it necessary to make this book have so many inconsistencies, so many mysteries, and deal so largely with the miraculous? If God wished to give a revelation of his will to men, He would surely give it, I am obliged to think, in the clearest, most unmistakable terms. That He is able so to give it, no one, I suppose, will dispute."

"No: I will not dispute it, Julian," answered Paul. "I will admit that God could have given us such a revelation of Himself as all of us would instantly have recognized as his. And He could have made us all, too, such creatures, could have given to each one of us such a disposition, or bias of

mind, as would have enabled us all to accept, without the slightest hesitation or cavil, the Christian Bible as a revelation from Himself. But He has done neither the one nor the other. It is not for me to seek to penetrate the arcana of his council, yet I will suggest this much: that, as faith is a virtue, the revelation He has given to man is as it is because He is—as one of our own poets* has expressed it—more pleased with virtue than with innocence. But you both object to the miraculous. Now, grant, for the sake of argument, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, how was He, let me ask, after coming among men, to make his divine origin known? By proclaiming it to men with his lips? Who would listen to Him, who would believe it, though He shouted it forth incessantly from year's end to year's end? How else could He make them believe it but by doing those things which a God only could do—by doing such wonderful deeds as have been ascribed to Him? You object to this revelation, too, because it contains things hard to be understood. The obscurity of some of the passages you have in your mind is due, I have no doubt, to an imperfect translation: some of these passages will, in time, as linguistic knowledge increases and the art of criticism improves, be cleared of their mists; some of them are unimportant; and some were designed, perhaps, to remain mysteries. But you must be careful, Julian, in discussing a question like this, not to misstate facts,—I know you will not do so intentionally. You say 'that several hundred years elapsed after Christ before it could be settled what was Scripture.' I think it would be difficult for you, or any one else, to establish that assertion as a fact of history. Again——"

"Oh, do, Mr. Paul Marable," interrupted Flora, "let us cease this dry discussion. Or, if you will discuss it, discuss it in a manner which will interest us all. Aunt Herard here, for all she looks so wise, has, I fear, but slight appreciation of your reasoning. What say you, aunt?"

"I say, let alone—leave to priest; he knows," spoke Miss Herard, with her usual paucity of words.

"That is an easy way to be rid of it all," answered the girl, laughing. "I think I must act upon it. But I will hardly select you, Mr. Paul Marable, to be my priest, my spir-

* Dr. J. G. Holland.

itual guide. I must have one less severe, and who would be more compliant."

"Will you let me nominate him for you, then?" asked Paul, quietly.

"You?" she said, as if considering the question, "you nominate my spiritual adviser, who must be, too, my father-confessor? No; but I will give this very important nomination to you, Mr. Julian. Who shall he be?"

"Stop, child!—the priest—the priest," put in the old aunt, with more animation than she usually showed.

"Yes, aunt; but *which* priest is what we want to determine just now. In making your selection, Mr. Julian, of this important personage,—important from this office to which you elect him,—you need not be confined to our little coterie here. If you select a stranger, you can inform him of the new duties devolving upon him; and by this means, too, we can become acquainted with each other."

"You will abide by my nomination?" asked Julian.

"Yes; though it is a rash promise," she answered.

"With a due sense of the honor conferred on me, Miss Flora, by this exhibition of your confidence in my judgment, I proceed to nominate as your guide in matters spiritual one whom I consider safe, and one whom, though you may not find him always compliant, you will find neither too severe nor too exacting. I nominate to this responsible position my brother, Mr. Paul Marable!"

Paul looked up in surprise as his brother called his own name, and then turned his eyes upon the girl to see how she received the nomination. Flora's face showed neither surprise nor disappointment, but wore a thoughtful expression, which, however, lasted only for a moment. Turning towards Paul, she said,—

"I do not ask you, Mr. Paul, if you accept the position; I take it for granted that you will. Of course I will abide by Mr. Julian's nomination, as I promised to do. But let me tell you now, in the beginning, that it will be a very difficult place for you to fill—for you, or any one else. In the first place, I give you warning that I will not listen patiently to moral lectures, or to sermons. I heard these things, while at school, until I became weary of them. I should not prescribe to you, of course; I would only intimate that you should not attempt

to go too fast. I may listen to these things more patiently after a while. But—a life is before us.”

“A life *is* before us,” repeated Paul, “but

“‘Life is brief,
And sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf—
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours;
All must be earnest in a world like ours.’”

A short silence followed the utterance of these verses. Flora was the first to break it.

“But I do have time,” she said, “to sport away the hours, and I intend to so use them. If I must be ‘earnest in a world like ours,’ I will be so in pursuit of its pleasures.”

Paul made no reply. He was looking away, with thoughtful eyes, toward the western horizon, where purple clouds with golden borders seemed to rest upon the wave. During the silence which followed Flora’s last speech, a lad, apparently fourteen years of age, came upon deck, and passing, with a languid step, to the rear of the boat, lay down, with his head resting on a coil of rope, not far from the group whose conversation has just been detailed. There was still light enough for them to see that he was a youth with homely features, and that he was poorly clad in a badly-soiled and ill-fitting pair of trousers, and a shirt made of coarse blue flannel. He happened to lie down within a few feet of Miss Herard, and nearer to her than to the others. As soon as her eyes fell upon him, she moved her seat, saying, in her own way,—

“Steerage—disease—one never knows.”

Soon after, a new subject was introduced, and, in the conversation which followed, the boy lying near was quite forgotten.

Directly, a low moan was heard to proceed from where the boy lay. Paul Marable got up, and went to him. He bent down over him, and asked if he were sick. Receiving no reply, he laid his hand upon his brow, and then upon his wrist to feel his pulse. He kept it there but a moment, when he stood up and called Miss Flora Blanchard to his side.

“Miss Flora,” he said, “this poor boy is very ill; he has become unconscious since he put himself here, and is now bordering on delirium. Will you please go—take Julian with you—and bring the ship’s surgeon to attend him?”

She drew back, as if offended.

"Why do you ask me to do this?" she asked.

"Because," answered Paul, very quietly, "I thought you would like to do it."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Marable," she said, with some hauteur; "the boy is nothing to me, and I have no taste for going on errands. So, excuse me."

"Certainly. Pardon my mistake; I thought he was something to us all." This Paul said while Flora was resuming her seat; then turning to his brother he continued, "Julian, I need your help. I have observed this boy from the day he came on board, and I believe him to be here without friends. He is now in need of help; will you please find the surgeon and bring him here?"

Julian, without making any reply, went away, while Paul turned again to the boy, who was now muttering incoherently, and making some show of getting up. In the mean time Miss Herard rose up, saying,—

"Time to go—boy—smallpox, hydrophoby; who knows? Come, Flor'."

Flora rose to follow her aunt, but Malcolm kept his seat. The old lady noticing this, said, as she passed him,—

"Come, Malcolm—whist."

The young man, however, kept his seat, as though he had not heard her, and sat silently watching the proceedings of Paul.

At length Julian returned, bringing with him both the captain and surgeon. After the latter had examined the boy, he pronounced his malady a malignant type of remittent fever, and expressed the opinion that unless he had very close and careful attention he would die.

"We must not let the poor fellow die, if we can help it," said the captain, and with an expression that spoke well for his humanity.

Paul at once offered his own berth for the boy, as he did not think it would be best for him to return to the steerage. "Let him be moved into my berth, captain," he said, "unless you have one unoccupied, in which case I will pay for his use of it."

"No; I will not ask you to do that," replied the captain. "It is usual to leave such cases where they belong, but as you

seem to be interested in him I will move him into more comfortable quarters. I will attend to it at once."

"And then, doctor," said Paul, addressing the surgeon, "you will want some one to stay with him while this fever lasts. I will be one for that duty; what say you, Julian, will you be a second?"

"Yes; I suppose so. Some one must relieve you; you can't do it by yourself," he added, as if to himself.

The sick boy was now taken up, placed upon a litter, and carried away between two of the boat's crew, the surgeon and Paul following them.

"That brother of yours is a study," said Malcolm Hillhouse to Julian when Paul had passed from sight. "I don't yet understand him, but I shall watch him. He seems to know exactly what he wants to do, and how to do it. But why should he put himself out about this young *sans culotte*? The lad is a stranger to him, I judge from what he said just now. I don't understand it."

"Nor I," answered Julian, quietly. "It is Paul's way."

Throughout that night Paul sat by the bedside of the sick boy, waiting upon him with the gentleness of a woman. The lad, through all the hours of the long watch, remained in a half somnolent state, talking and moaning incessantly. His utterances were, for the most part, incoherent, yet enough of them were intelligible to make Paul suspect that he had, at times, been subjected to very rough usage. At one time he would be talking to himself, at another as if to companions, at still another as if speaking to horses, and then raising himself on his cot and with his eyes wide open, he would cry out as if in pain or fright, or with appealing words and tones. He continued thus until about four o'clock in the morning, when he appeared to yield so far to the medicine which had been given him as to fall into a quiet sleep. After watching him for another hour Paul, having first called Julian to take his place, sought rest in his own berth. He slept until nine o'clock, ate his breakfast, and then, after walking a while on deck, returned to the sick boy. He found him still asleep and his fever much abated. The surgeon had been there an hour before, Julian said, and had expressed the opinion that the boy would now soon recover. He left medicine for him to take on his awaking, and

also instructions that he should not be suffered to talk, at least through that day.

Paul had been seated by the bedside about an hour when the lad opened his eyes. Paul, looking into them, saw at once that the delirium had passed. The boy, attempting to raise himself, said, feebly,—

“I’m in the wrong box, aint I? I didn’t mean to do it, sir.”

“Didn’t mean to do what?” asked Paul.

“Get into this ’ere cab,” answered the boy.

Paul then briefly explained to him how he came to be there, and ended by saying that he must lie there very quietly and must not talk any that day, for so the doctor had ordered. After this he lay quite still, turning his eyes, which seemed to be of a greenish hue, to different objects in the room, yet always bringing them back to the face of the young man who sat there, and whose attention was apparently absorbed with a book.

Presently he descried, hanging in a corner of the apartment, his own soiled and torn garments, which had been taken from him the night before; then turning quickly his eyes to the white shirt front that covered his breast, and which was partly exposed below the coverlet, he surveyed it with quiet surprise.

“By jimini!” he suddenly exclaimed, but checking himself, said, in a low tone, “’Scuse me, mister, I forgot I mustn’t gab.”

Then, as if to avoid the temptation to speak again, he turned his face to the ship’s wall. He lay thus about a half-hour, when, turning partly back, he said,—

“Mister.” Paul coming to him, he continued, “Let me ax ye one question, jes’ one; d’ye think, now, I’ll peg out this time?”

“No, I do not,” answered Paul, cheerily. “You have been very sick, and are still weak, but you will get well; we have every reason to think, now, that you will get well.”

“Jes’ one mo’ word, mister, and then ye may put the gag on me again. I’ve got two dollars, jes’ two, in the pocket of them ’ar breeches,” pointing to them as he spoke. “Now, if I should peg out, will ye take ’em and give ’em to Jem Reid, a boy ’bout my size, and b’longin’ to Mr. Showell’s circus?”

"I might try to find him," said Paul; "but there will be no need for me to look him up, I'm sure. You will not peg out this time, my boy, so don't think anything more about it."

The lad again turned him to the wall, and in a few minutes was asleep. It was not necessary now that some one should remain with him the whole time. And although in the middle of the afternoon his fever began to rise, yet such were the circumstances of the case that the surgeon felt assured it would not rise, as on the previous night, to a degree producing delirium. It would be safest, however, he said, that he be constantly watched through the night.

Late that evening the group of five were again on deck, and at the same place as on the preceding evening.

"Looking," said Hillhouse, and stretching his hand towards the heavens as he spoke, "at this grand array of worlds spread before us, it is impossible for me to conceive of Him who has made and controls them, of Him who sits as omnipotent King on the central throne of the universe, as turning aside to inflict torments upon his creatures, his only aim being the infliction of pain. Such vengeance, in my humble opinion, can add nothing to his glory."

"The orthodox Christian tells us, too," pursued Julian, "that his God is a God of love, full of tender compassion towards all his creatures, and in the next sentence will describe Him as taking vengeance, a pitiless and unending vengeance, on the impotent creatures of his own hand. If this punishment was remedial, there might be mercy behind it; as it is, I cannot understand Him. Now, I willingly acknowledge that man is sinful by nature, that in sin there is degradation, and that there is need of redemption. I confess these things; and sometimes, too, in looking upon my own life, and then upon the better lives of some that I see around me, I wonder if these doubts of mine are not from a heart blighted before its time,—like Manfred's, 'scorched already.'"

"I am vexed by no such questionings," answered Hillhouse, with something like a mocking smile, "nor am I so free to admit that man is by nature sinful, and in need of redemption. But, granting that he is, it strikes me that the Christian's scheme of redemption has proved wholly inadequate. We are obliged to consider it so, at least I am, whether we look at the many millions of earth still profoundly ignorant of it, or the

countless billions of the spirit-world who, according to the dogmatic teachings of its expounders, are everlastingly damned. What say you to that, Paul?"

"I will say this," began the young man, standing up as he spoke, "that the adequateness of Christianity to redeem the world has been, to my mind, abundantly proved by the steady progress it has made from the day of its introduction. That this progress has been slow, I will admit, but that it has been continuous, all must, I am convinced, who are acquainted with its history, admit. I will say further, that what Christianity has done, and what it is now doing for the moral reformation of the world, is, to my mind, the clearest evidence of its truth. When I look upon its humble origin, and then upon its present growth and vigorous life, I am convinced that it is of God."

"But what of those already lost?" asked Hillhouse.

"When the Bible speaks of that class," answered Paul, "it uses, for the most part, metaphorical language. Of their exact condition we are left, purposely, I think, ignorant. Concerning it I teach nothing dogmatically, save that they suffer. They are in the hands of God; there I am willing to leave them."

"My father-confessor has answered them well. What say you, aunt?"

"All wrong—let 'em go to priest—he knows."

"Come, Mr. Paul Marable," said Flora, breaking the short silence which followed Miss Herard's brief remark, "let us leave these Freethinkers—you are not included in that term, aunt. I feel like walking."

Paul at once offered his arm to the young lady for a promenade on deck. They walked back and forth the now nearly deserted deck, the young lady doing most of the talking. Presently, noticing the rather abstracted air of her companion, she asked,—

"You are thinking, I dare say, of the boy you picked yesterday from the rubbish of the steerage. How is he to-day?"

"He is better," answered Paul, quietly.

"He is grateful, I suppose, and, of course, will prove a rough diamond?"

"Yes, he is grateful, and he is—not will be—a diamond."

But, did you know, Miss Flora, that all human hearts are diamonds? Some—alas! too many—are covered deep with rubbish, through which there comes no glittering light. But the diamond is there, nevertheless, and, under the polishing hand of God, it may be made to shine.”

“Are you right sure that that you have just uttered is not mere sentiment?”

“It is sentiment which I wish to carry with me through life. To me it is not meaningless. But you spoke a while ago, Miss Flora, of the steerage passengers as rubbish. Does not that remark do you injustice?”

Blushing a little at the latent rebuke in his words, she said, hesitatingly,—

“Well, I suppose you must not take those words too literally.”

“I will not, then, for your sake.”

They continued their walk, during which Paul told the little he had gathered of the sick boy's history from his hardly intelligible mutterings the previous night. He also told what had passed between the boy and himself that morning after the latter's return to consciousness. Flora listened to these details with some show of interest, but made no reply. At the end of an hour she resumed her seat, while Paul went away to look after his sick *protégé*.

Although the lad still had fever, yet it was not necessary, the physician said, for any one to remain with him through that night. Nevertheless, Paul had a cot moved into the room, that in case he should need assistance, he would be at hand to give it. His services, however, were not needed, except to give a dose of medicine at twelve o'clock. In the morning, when he went to the boy, he found him entirely free from fever, and when, a little later, the surgeon came in, the interdict on his speaking was removed, and a light breakfast prescribed for him. Paul carried to the boy the simple breakfast which he had prepared for him, and saw with satisfaction that he ate it with some appetite.

After he had eaten, he lay very quietly for some minutes, keeping his eyes fixed for the most part on the countenance of his benefactor, who sat near by, reading a book. At length Paul laid aside his book; as he did so, the boy asked,—

“Is we most to land now, mister?”

"It will be two days yet before we can expect to reach Liverpool," answered Paul. "And when we get there, where will you go?"

"I doesn't know."

"You do not know? Have you no friends there to meet you?"

"Friends?" repeated the boy; "who is they? I never had none."

"Never had father or mother, or some one to look after you, to take care of you?"

"None o' them, leastways sence I knowed anything. But stop," he continued, while a new expression crept into his pale face; "no one to take keer o' me, did ye say? It do strike me that I has had one; yes, sir, sence I come aboard this 'ere boat, fur ef it hadn't been fur yerself, sir, Jake Mullins wouldn't ha' curried nar' another boss in this world, I guess. Oh, sir, I ricollect it well now, how sick I was. I was sick all that day, but said nothin' to nobody 'bout it. I knowed nobody, an' nobody knowed me. Besides, afo' this, who keered for Jake, who keered ef his head was bustin' open with pain; who looked a'ter him, 'ceptin' it was to cuss or beat him?"

"But why are you going to England?" asked Paul.

"I doesn't know where I'm a-goin', sir; I only knows I'm gettin' away from t'other country—gittin' away from ole Burner."

"Who is old Burner, and why do you wish to get away from him?"

"He is our ringmaster; and I run away from him 'cause he beats me. Oh, sir, he *wus* a burner; the ole bad un himself couldn't roast a fellow wuss than ole Burner used to roast us boys. But he won't gridiron my hide fur me any mo', damn him! 'Scuse me, sir; that slipped out afo' I thought, bein' as I never speaks o' him wi' my mates 'cept it is to cuss him."

"You belonged, then, to a circus?" still questioned Paul.

"Yes, sir; ever sence I knowed anything."

"What do you know of your parents?"

"Nothin', I may say, sir; an' yit I do sometimes have a 'membrance, shadylike it be, though, o' livin' somewhere, in a small house close by a river. And there wus a tall woman

there, with big black eyes. I ricollect wunst a man come into the house—I doesn't know where the woman was then—and he caught me up roughlike, an' pushed somethin' into my mouth, which hurt me, an' kep' me from hollerin'; he then carried me off, carried me off a long ways. The nex' thing I knowed, I was with the circus folk."

"Go on," said Paul. "What else do you remember?"

"Well, sir, I stopped 'cause I didn't think as ye would keer to hear any mo' of it. I doesn't recollect much o' the fust year or two a'ter I got wi' the circus, but they put me to ridin' hosses mighty soon—'bout as soon as they ever starts 'em. The nex' thing I call to mind—it must ha' been three or four years a'ter I jined 'em, but it's clear like, as if it happened yestiddy—wus bein' run over by a wild hoss. When I come to, I was laid out somewhere, an' seed a man with a knife in his hand bendin' over me. I didn't like that, an' so tried to get up, but I couldn't do it, fur I found I was tied down. I felt, too, a great pain in one o' my feet, which would ha' made me keep still enough ef I hadn't been tied. Then the man wi' the knife helt somethin' to my nose, a'ter which I didn't know nothin'. The nex' thing I ricollect wus lyin' in a tent, with my foot wrapped round with cloth, and ole Burner an' Mr. Showell, who owns the circus, standin' by, talkin'. Ole Burner wanted to leave me where I wus. 'Somebody will find him,' he said, 'an' take keer o' him; but ef they don't, what odds does it make? he's fit fur nothin' now.' But the boss wouldn't hear to that. 'We can make a hostler of him,' said he, 'an' he will do us good sarvice yit.' Oh, my stars! how many times has I sence wished, when ole Burner was a blisterin' o' me, that they had left me there that day by myself! 'Twas a long time b'fo' I could walk agin. The hoss had mashed the toes o' one foot so that they had to come off, an' that was what the man wi' the knife, that I told you of, was a doin'. B'fo' I got my hurt I begun to go in the ring, an' they say I bid fa'r to be a number one rider. But sence then I've had to 'tend to the hosses, an' when they was a-showin', lead 'em in."

"Why was old Burner so hard on you?" asked Paul.

"He was hard on me an' t'other boys, too, as had to 'tend to the hosses. He was jes' a nat'ral devil. God knows I done my best to keep the hosses clean, an' to git 'em in the

ring in time, but nothin' would please him; he *would* cuss an' beat me. The mornin' o' the day I come aboard this boat he threatened to tie me, an' give it to me on my naked back; but I give him the slip, I did—ho, ho!—an' I reckon he's a-searchin' fur me yit."

"Can you recollect anything more of your home in the little house by the river?" asked Paul. "Do you know where it was—in what State?"

"From what I've heerd some o' the circus folks say," replied the boy, "I think it was in Georgey, but they never told me for cert'in. Let me see," he continued, dwelling on his words in the effort to recall something more of his past life,—some dim memory, perhaps, which had been with him more distinctly in earlier years. "Let me see," he repeated; "yes, I recollect now. Wunst another tall woman, dressed in black she was, come to the little house by the river. She picked me up, and looked at me so long and hard like that I was skeered of her, and I run off when she put me down. I 'members nothin' else, 'cept that the woman that was there all the time—the one I told ye of fust—would take me up sometimes in her lap, and used to call me Ben. I told the circus folks that my name was Ben when I fust joined 'em, but they paid no 'tention to it, alwes calling me Jake,—sometimes Jake Mullins."

"And which name do you intend to keep?" asked Paul.

"Ben; it's my own name; I knows it is. And I want to get rid o' Mullins too; of everything to put me in mind o' the circus. Would ye mind, now, givin' me another name?"

"You want me to give you a name, do you?" said Paul. "Well, let me think a moment. Now I have it. I will give you the name of a brave fellow I once knew, whose name was Matt Goodson. Your name then will be Ben Goodson. How will that do?"

"I like it," answered the boy: and then he repeated it to himself with evident satisfaction.

After this Paul told him the story of Matt Goodson, to which he listened with deep interest. He was silent at its conclusion, his mind evidently struggling with new thoughts and impulses.

At length Paul broke the silence by asking,—

"What are you going to do, Ben, when you get to England?"

"I doesn't know yit, sir," answered Ben. "Ef it warn't fur this spell o' sickness I wouldn't be oneasy a minit. I knows all about a hoss, and I ain't afeerd o' work, neither."

"We will try to see to it, then, after we get there," replied Paul, "that you find a place where you may stay until your strength is restored."

The conversation here ended, for Paul resumed his book, and a little while after the boy fell into a gentle slumber.

That evening, as the stars began to peep forth, one by one, from the twilight sky, Paul and Flora took their seats on deck, at the same place where, with their friends, they have been noticed for the two evenings preceding.

Their conversation turned, at length,—it was turned by Flora,—upon Paul's *protégé*, Ben Goodson. Why was it that she drew him on to speak of this neglected child? What was he to her? What could this waif from the riff-raff of society be to her? Perhaps Paul's words, "I thought he was something to us *all*," had lingered with her. Be that as it may, the fact is she drew him on to speak of the boy.

Again, as the young man's words fell upon her ear, she saw the friendless lad come staggering forward, and stretch himself near them, pillowing his aching head upon a coil of rope. The whole scene is again before her; she hears the boy's groans; and then, too, between Paul's sentences, come back her own words: and these do not have the pleasant sound that Paul's have, there is an accent of harshness about them: and then comes into her heart a half-formed regret that she had used them. As Paul talks on she sees now the boy tossing and moaning in the delirium of fever; and, though the speaker leaves himself out of the picture as much as possible, the girl sees him there,—sees him through all the silent watches of the night, with the gentleness of a woman, and alone, bending over the couch of the neglected lad. And then, as the narrator continued, she saw this boy, a little child, snatched from his mother, and sold to a travelling circus. She saw how, through long years, he was exposed to vice, and subjected to brutal treatment; how, when the unfeeling ring-master would lay the lash upon the child's back, there was no father to protect, no mother to rush forward and, with the courage of ma-

ternal love, snatch her boy from the cruel blows. Through all those years there seemed to come to her, as she listened to the musical tones of Paul, the unanswered wail of a child's heart. And, as she listened, new feelings stirred within her own. Were they the first faint ripples of a healthful sea, rolling on, with high, strong waves, with fresh, pure waves, toward her life's thirsty shore?

A short silence followed Paul's conclusion. It was broken by Flora's asking for the story of Matt Goodson, this having been suggested to her by what Paul had said in connection with his giving a name to Ben.

Paul told the story simply; he spoke in low tones, and with a voice always musical. The girl listened, in silence, to its end.

"It is very strange," she then said. "I mean that part of it where he almost foretells his speedy death, and that his life would be given for you and yours. This, I think, was plainly intimated by his words. And now this story has interested me in the boy, Tim Piper. It seems, from what the pilot said to you, that you befriended this boy on a former occasion. I want to hear, now, how you did this; I want to hear the *whole* story, just as it occurred, every word of it."

So Paul was forced to tell to her this story. If she suspected him of omitting, as unnecessary or unimportant, any speech or act of his own, she would interrupt him, and again insist upon hearing it without any omissions.

By the time this was concluded they noticed, for the first time, the lateness of the hour, and that all had left the deck but themselves. They, therefore, went to rejoin their friends, whom they found in the great cabin, engaged in a game of euchre.

The next morning Flora assisted Paul in preparing breakfast for the sick boy. As they were passing with it to his room, one of them bearing a plate and the other a cup of tea, they met with Julian and Malcolm.

The latter, stepping aside to let them pass, touched his hat, and, with a mocking but good-natured smile on his face, said,—

"This is, I believe, Miss Flora Blanchard. *O tempus ferax rerum!* Will wonders never cease?"

She made no reply, but with a tranquil smile followed Paul

to the bedside of the sick boy. Ah ! Flora, hitherto so light and heartless, wilt thou indeed follow Paul Marable—follow him on, and on, and still on ? Wilt thou indeed follow him—follow him up, and up, and still up ? Or wilt thou, at sight of the rugged hills he will bring thee to, lose faith in thy guide, and turn from him thy steps ?

CHAPTER XXV.

AT BADEN-BADEN.

A WEEK later Julian and Paul Marable, with their new friends, were in London, that great city with which they had been familiar from childhood,—even more familiar with it than with their own metropolitan New York. London has been called an epitome of the world, for within its limits you may behold something of every clime, and of almost every age. With much justice may it be called the world's metropolis; especially is this true as regards the world of literature. There, during four centuries, has been gathering a literature which that of no other country, whether ancient or modern, can equal; and then, increased and enriched as it is by the literature of every other land and language, we cannot but consider London as the centre of the literary world.

The four youthful Americans—Miss Herard kept to her hotel—devoted a couple of weeks to wandering through the wonderful city in the inspection of its various objects of note. But that place which had for them the greatest attraction was the British Museum and Library. Here the Marable brothers, surrounded by the grandest collection of books in the world,—over a million volumes,—would have been content to remain an indefinite time. But they could not remain longer than two weeks in London; so, leaving Miss Herard to await their return in the latter city, the party of four set out towards Scotland. Their destination was Edinburgh, and their object was to pay a brief visit to such places along the route, and which were easily accessible, as were full to them of literary or historic interest.

While in England and Scotland these youthful Americans never realized that they were in a foreign country. On the contrary, they roamed the moors and fields of England and the heathery hills of Scotland with the same careless freedom

and eager interest that the long-absent son feels on revisiting the familiar scenes of his childhood's home.

After several weeks thus spent, the party bade adieu to the grand old isle and embarked for Naples. They stayed but a short time in Italy,—the most of this they passed in Rome,—intending to revisit it before they returned to America. From Rome they went by rail to Vienna, and thence, without stopping, to Northern Germany. Flora and her aunt stopped at Munich, where the former would pursue her musical studies.

Arrived in Berlin, the three young men prosecuted assiduously the course prescribed to them. After eight months thus devoted to hard study, they concluded to spend a few weeks at Baden-Baden, and from there go on to Paris, where they would make a stay of some months.

Flora exchanged letters regularly with both Malcolm and Paul until within one month of the time fixed upon by the young men for their departure from Berlin, when her letters wholly ceased coming. That a whole month should pass without bringing a letter from her was to them inexplicable, and caused them some uneasiness. They had intended to write to the ladies to meet them in Baden, but, under the circumstances, they thought it best to go first to Munich. On arriving at the latter place, they learned with surprise that the ladies they sought had left it a month before; nor could the proprietor of the house where they had had their rooms tell to what place they had gone. It was his opinion, however, based upon some remarks the ladies had made when about to leave, and his knowledge of the route they had taken, that they would be found at one of the noted watering-places in Northern Germany, either in Weisbaden or Baden, most probably the latter.

The young men left Munich by the next train, determined to go first to Baden. Arriving here at five o'clock in the afternoon, they went at once to the Hotel d'Angleterre. Not finding those whom they sought here, they went to the Conversations-haus, for at that hour or a little later, within its capacious halls or on the terraces in front of it, by far the larger part of the strangers in Baden were to be found.

During the summer months, prior to the year when the Emperor refused to renew the license under which the gambling-halls had been opened, Baden-Baden used to be crowded

with many thousands of visitors, among which all Christian nationalities had their representatives, England and the United States furnishing larger numbers, perhaps, than any others. Baden is not only a noted spa, but is one of the most picturesque and attractive places in all Germany. Its greatest attraction, however, to a large part of its visitors, was to be found, not in its beautiful scenery, nor the curative properties of its waters, but in the gambling-halls of the Conversations-haus already mentioned. But the gambling-saloons were not the only attractions of the Conversations-haus, for, besides these, it contained spacious and magnificently furnished dining, drawing, reading and concert rooms, all of which, during the season, were constantly thronged with gay and well-dressed men and women, both old and young.

Soon after entering this house, Malcolm, stopping to speak to an old acquaintance, became separated from his friends. Wandering first through the reading, and then through the concert rooms, Julian and Paul passed into a room where roulette was played. The table was thronged so that those on the outer edge of the crowd could not without difficulty make their bets. All ages and both sexes were there, and, perhaps, all classes of society were represented, though all were well dressed. Gravity and decorum pervaded the room; no one, except the banker, speaking above a whisper. The players, at least the great majority of them, seemed wholly intent upon the game; while their faces, to a casual observer, expressed no excitement, or emotion of any kind. But this expression of indifference, which seemed characteristic of the place, was more apparent than real, for a keen observer would have discovered, in certain twitchings of the eyelids or of the muscles of the lips, and, again, in certain white spots about the nose or mouth, an excitement far more than ordinary.

It has been said that there is no passion which takes such complete possession of the human soul as the passion for gaming. Like everything else that is evil, man has a natural fondness for it: yet the number of those who deliberately, or from choice, become gamblers is small. Thousands of those who have sat down to a faro or a roulette table, with no other object than to while away a few hours, or to be in the fashion, have come to find, at last, their home, their all of life, their past, their present, and their future, their earth and heaven,

shrunk into only those fleeting moments they pass at the gaming-table.

On the continent of Europe, the sense of propriety in English and American tourists is often shocked—until they become accustomed to the sight—by witnessing the mingling of the two sexes around the tables where roulette and rouge-et-noir are played. It was thus with Julian and Paul at Baden; and although their faces showed nothing of this feeling, yet they did express something more than the well-bred cosmopolite's indifference.

The brothers passed through this and a second room without meeting with any whom they knew; they then entered a third room, where was gathered a larger crowd than was in either of the others, and where rouge-et-noir was played. After a few minutes given to the inspection of the bettors, they descried, sitting close to the table, the small person of Miss Herard. She was betting, and her whole attention was fixed upon the game. There was the old look of deadness about her face, but there was now a light in her small black eyes which showed an excitement which the brothers had never suspected her capable of feeling. Immediately on recognizing her they cast their eyes again over the crowd, expecting to discover Flora, but being disappointed in this they turned them once more upon Miss Herard. They watched her for an hour or two, during which they saw her win several hundred florins, notwithstanding, like most of the habitués of the place, her bets were small.

Convinced, at length, that Miss Herard had no intention of quitting the table until the rooms should be closed for that evening, the young men continued their survey of the gambling-saloons; not that they expected to find Flora among their crowds, but because they knew not where to look for her, and had nothing else to do.

After a while they passed into a larger room than any they had yet entered, and in which were several roulette tables. As they were passing one of these, Paul stopped and pointed out to his brother a young woman, apparently twenty years of age, whom he had observed, he said, soon after they entered the town that afternoon, in a pawnbroker's establishment, in the act of disposing of a pair of bracelets. They saw now that she was without ear-rings or other jewelry. After watching

her with interest for a few minutes they passed on to another table.

But what was the surprise of the brothers to find, among the bettors grouped around this table, the person whom they had sought, Miss Flora Blanchard! Withdrawing silently to a little distance, but near enough to watch the table, they waited for the game to end. At its conclusion they were glad to see Flora leave the table and go towards the door. They followed, and overtook her in one of the corridors leading from the house.

Flora was evidently much pleased at the meeting, and, true to her impulses, made no effort to conceal her pleasure. They walked out on the terrace in front of the house, and then along one of those beautiful promenades which add so much to the charms of Baden.

"We saw Miss Herard," said Paul, as they walked along, "at one of the rouge-et-noir tables, but did not acquaint her with our presence."

"Aunt is a confirmed gambler," replied Flora. "She comes here every season,—either here or to some other of the German spas. We need not expect to see her until the playing ceases, which will be about twelve o'clock. Did Malcolm come with you?"

"Yes; he is here somewhere, and is looking for you. How long have you been here, Miss Flora?"

"About two weeks. We went to Ems from Munich. But I wrote you that we would go there."

"Your letter did not reach me," answered Paul. "Your last letter, received more than a month ago, said nothing about your leaving Munich."

Flora looked up in surprise.

"You have received no letter from me in a month?" she asked. "I have forwarded you four letters since we left Munich,—two from Ems and two from this place. But not one came from either you or Malcolm in that time."

"Yet we both continued to write until within a few days of our leaving Berlin. Did you see your letters mailed?"

"No; I did not. I put them into aunt's hands; it being necessary for her to go nearly every day to the office, so she said, as she was expecting a remittance from America."

From all that they had heard the young men could not but

suspect the old aunt of being able to account for the missing letters. They soon, however, turned the conversation to other subjects.

After supper, which the three took together at the English hotel, Flora proposed that they return to the Conversations-haus.

"You wish again to woo the fickle goddess?" asked Paul.

"How did you know that I had been playing?" she asked, looking up with surprise.

"I saw you so engaged."

"You saw me, and said nothing? Then you do not altogether disapprove of it?"

"I do, Miss Flora, *in toto*," said Paul, seriously. "But come, let us go there, for I wish to show you one whom I noticed there, in the same room in which I found you. She is a young woman, two or three years older than yourself. Let our chief object be to observe this woman, with a view to helping her if an opportunity occurs."

"I can't promise you my help in such a case," answered Flora. "If you expect to help all the unfortunate ones, whether men or women, old or young, who come here to lose their money, and with that their senses, you are more Quixotic than I believed you to be. You must not be moved with generous impulses here. People leave their emotional natures behind them when they start for such a place as this."

"I have become interested in the fate of this young woman," said Paul, quietly, "and I shall watch her with a view to helping her, even at the risk of being deemed Quixotic by my friends, or being regarded a half-witted driveller by the wise cosmopolites here, whose highest conception of a man is an automaton."

Arrived at the Conversations-haus, Paul led the way into the room in which he had found Flora. He soon after pointed out to her and Julian a young woman whose countenance they could see, because she was across the corner of the table from themselves, and near the outer edge of the group surrounding it.

"See," said Paul, in a whisper, "how she struggles to appear calm; that she is enabled to do so at all is because she has been subjected so long to the chilling influence which pervades this room. Notice that, though she is richly dressed, she wears

not a single piece of jewelry. I saw her this afternoon at a pawnbroker's before I saw her here, which accounts for the absence of it. See how she raises her hand now and then—and slyly, as if conscious of violating the propriety of the place—and presses it against her flushed temples. Mark how her bloodless lips are pressed together in a resolute despair; and, worst feature of all, see the uncertain and furtive flashes of her eye. Look! now her gaze is fixed upon her little pile of florins, as though they are all she has,—woe be to the woman if the soulless croupier sweeps them to himself! Again her glance wanders; see its baffled and unhinged expression. God grant we be not too late in our effort to save her—that she be not already mad! Do you know what madness engendered at the gaming-table ends in? It ends in suicide!”

Flora shuddered as Paul concluded. The next instant the little pile of florins disappeared. The young woman turned from her place, and very silently left the room. She had the look of one wishing to avoid observation.

“Follow her, Miss Flora, and speak to her, in God’s name!” whispered Paul.

“Come with me, and I will,” she answered, resolutely, when they both immediately left the room.

They saw the woman pass out of the front door, and out on to the brilliantly-lighted terrace, still thronged with men and women. They quickened their steps, but lost sight of her as they came upon the terrace. They hurried on in the direction she seemed to be going when they last saw her, which was towards one of the largest hotels in the place. There were many groups ahead of them, going in the same direction. These were successively passed and scanned, but the pale face of the girl they sought was with none of them. They began to feel how hopeless was their task. As they came in sight of the hotel there was a crowd standing in front of it and upon its steps, and still others entering its doorway. They went on, still looking for her, but their search proved futile. When convinced, at last, that it would be useless to continue it, they returned to the Conversations-haus.

They met Julian and Malcolm at the door. After Flora and Malcolm had exchanged greetings, the latter said,—

“Julian was just telling me before you came up that you did write to us, Miss Flora; now I want to know what became

of your letters. I dare be sworn that that sage aunt of yours can tell us, if she would."

"Don't accuse aunt of that, Malcolm, or you and I will certainly quarrel. But I shall tell her your suspicions as soon as I see her; nor will I have to wait long for that, as the time has come for closing the house."

The crowd beginning to pour out through the front doors as she ceased speaking, she and her companions stationed themselves where they would be certain to intercept Miss Herard when she came out. She happened to be among the last to leave the house. When she did make her appearance, her passionless face showed neither surprise nor pleasure at the presence of the young men. She met them as though she had parted from them only a few hours before. As they walked on towards the hotel where the ladies were stopping, Flora said,—

"These young gentlemen say, aunt, that they have received no letter from me in a month; and Mr. Malcolm Hillhouse has the audacity to say that you can tell——"

"What?" interrupted the old lady, with more animation than she had ever before shown, and turning her sharp face towards Malcolm, "tell what?"

"That you can tell what became of my letters. Of course I don't believe it, aunt."

"No, child, no! How does he know? how? They were lost." Then, changing the subject and jingling her bag of florins, she continued: "Was in luck to-night—bet on black—*rien ne va plus*." There was no connection between this last expression and anything she had before said. It was an expression constantly repeated by the dealer at the table she had just left, and which seemed to be still running through her head.

The next day it was reported that a young woman, supposed to be from France, was found dead that morning in her room. On her table was an empty vial, which had contained laudanum. This was a sufficient clue to her fate. To the habitués of the spa it told a familiar tale, which they received with indifference, and dismissed from their thoughts the next moment. What was it to them, or to the directors of the bank, that a young woman who had been unfortunate chose to end her trouble by ending her life? Nothing, only

the directors wished that she had left Baden before she did it. But somebody was responsible for the suicide's act. If the ears of the callous habitués and pleasure-loving visitors of Baden had not been wilfully closed, they would have heard the question of Him who is the common father of us all, "Where is this, thy sister, that I sent amongst you?" Perhaps some did hear it; if so, the old, old answer was returned: "Am I my sister's keeper?" But there cometh a day when it will be no longer possible for a man to shift his responsibility, when he must render an account of the manner in which he has dealt with his brother and his sister. It will be in that day when the Great Arbiter shall redress all the wrongs done unto men. Woe unto those on that day who have placed temptation in their brother's path, or led his footsteps in the way of vice; and a double woe unto those who are responsible for the existence of the gambling-hells of earth!

Paul and Flora went together to look upon the face of the dead woman. They were not surprised to recognize her as the same whom they had tried to save the evening before.

All that was known of this misguided girl was her name, Felicie Rubens, which was marked on her linen. There was a little pile of burnt papers in the grate, which, with the absence of all papers in her trunk, plainly told of her desire to conceal her identity.

Paul and Flora gazed a few moments on the still, white face before them, then silently went away, went away thinking sorrowfully of the shipwrecked life, and of the grief and disappointment brought into the lives of others. Yes, there were some somewhere, they thought, who loved the lost girl. Felicie! Did not her name show that on her coming into the world she brought joy into some heart? Felicie! What mockery in her name now!

The young man and his companion continued their walk until the gay city, with its teeming crowds, was left behind them, until they were in the midst of a lonely valley, above which towered a wooded mountain and along whose bottom flowed a laughing brook. It was then that Flora, after telling Paul how fascinated she had become with gaming, and how she had felt this fascination growing daily upon her, voluntarily announced her intention never to bet again. And then

Paul, in few words, told how pleased he was to hear her say so, because, he said, he felt assured that such a pledge from her was not idly given.

During the time that Julian and Paul remained at Baden they made some acquaintances, most of them among the English-speaking portion of the visitors.

Miss Flora Blanchard, or *La Belle Americaine*, as she was called, had many admirers, nor were these confined to her own countrymen. Nor was Flora indifferent to the flattering attentions paid her. But it happened, more than once, that when she was the central object of attraction amid a little coterie of gentlemen, she would suddenly withdraw herself, and, taking the arm of a yellow-haired American, who was passing by, wander away with him through some shaded alley or some charming promenade. It is not surprising, therefore, that those of Flora's admirers whose intentions in regard to her were serious came to be jealous of the handsome American, whose influence over her all recognized more than himself.

When the three American students left Berlin it was their intention to stay only two or three weeks at Baden, and then go to Paris, expecting then to be able to carry Flora and her aunt with them. But they learned soon after arriving in Baden that in this last expectation they would be disappointed, Miss Herard announcing her determination to remain at Baden until the end of the season, which usually lasted until October. The effect of this knowledge was to lengthen the stay of the young men at Baden four weeks, thus making six weeks as the period of their sojourn there. At the end of this time Julian and Paul would go to Paris, but Malcolm would return to Berlin.

But the last day came, at length. Malcolm left at five o'clock in the afternoon; Julian and Paul would leave at eleven.

After the stars came out, Paul and Flora sat and talked for a long time on a quiet corner of the moon-lighted balcony of the *Hotel d'Angleterre*. The balmy night air was filled with the strains of sweet music; the illuminated walks below full of life and gayety, and beyond the silent mountains, all formed a scene at once charming and impressive. Paul and Flora were likely to remember it, yet they would remember it only on account of the associations with which it was linked. Not

the external scene so much, but the emotions then excited, memory would recall, with a thrill of pleasure or of pain, in after-days.

Yet the young man spoke not of love to the beautiful young girl; he did not know that he loved her,—he only knew that she stirred his heart in a manner no one else had ever done. He had never stopped to analyze this feeling; he simply recognized it, and accepted it. It was the recognition of this feeling, and the half-formed desire in his heart to let her see it, which made his tones more musically soft than usual that night. And Flora on that last evening was something different from what she had been; she had lost something of her vivacity. In the secret chambers of her soul she had heard a whisper which her lips would refrain from repeating, even to herself; it was, that she was beloved by Paul Marable. This consciousness was vaguely formed, yet it filled her soul.

The time came for them to separate. They lingered over those last moments, for they knew not when they would again meet. Julian's footsteps were heard rapidly approaching as he came to say good-by; at the same time the shrill whistle of the locomotive gave a similar warning.

And so they parted, to be reunited—when?

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT PARIS.

THE Marable brothers devoted the first two weeks of their stay in the French capital wholly to sight-seeing. They found, of course, in Paris much to interest, instruct, and delight them. They found, too, every means for prosecuting with advantage their studies.

Here, as in Berlin, they found a large number of their own countrymen; sufficiently large and varied to enable them to have what kind of companionship they desired.

While in Berlin, Julian's associates had been, for the most part, not only those who, like himself, entertained serious doubts of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the rationalists, but avowed infidels and materialists. There was a common bond of union between Julian and the most of these companions,—they all loved the world alike, especially those pleasures which were forbidden by the stern ethics of a pure Christianity.

Was not this the first cause of their scepticism? They looked forth upon a world full of delights and capable of gratifying, so it seemed to them, all the desires of their intense and imaginative natures. With hearts that were easily inflamed by woman's charms, and with souls that nourished the pride of intellect and the thirst for fame, it was natural—ah, how natural!—for them to turn away from that religion whose spirit would forever shut them out, so it seemed, from those beautiful pleasure-gardens stretching before them; would humble their pride and put a limit upon their aspirations. Though it was thus with Julian and with the majority of those sceptical friends who gathered about him, both at Berlin and at Paris, yet others were led to their conclusions by other and different ways or influences. Some, from the natural bias of their minds,—and this class also included Julian,—were sceptical of everything claiming to be supernatural; and to this

class must be added those whose minds, from early training, had been fitted for the reception of similar doubts. Others again,—and this class has been growing quite rapidly of late years,—from the study of the physical sciences, thinking that they discovered irreconcilable discrepancies between the revelation of science and the Bible in regard to the creation of the world and the origin of man, have been led to reject those of the latter. From this latter school, the scientists, have sprung the materialists, who profess to believe that all things are self-existent and self-directed, and that everything, even thought and the various sensations of the mind, are only modifications of matter.

The coterie of which Julian found himself a member while in Paris was composed, for the most part, of young men who, being much better versed in the writings of German rationalists, French encyclopædists, and English scientists and essayists than they were in the Bible, had learned to regard the latter book in pretty much the same light as they regarded all other religious books,—as compiled, doubtless, by good men, but now altogether antiquated, and in no way necessary to the further progress of civilization. They were quite satisfied that they could live without it. The ethics, therefore, of these young men was quite different from that which is taught by the Bible. It would be unjust, perhaps, to characterize it as French, yet it was of that character which we should naturally look for in the followers of Voltaire and Rousseau, and the companions of De Kock and Gautier. In one word, their ethics was neither Socratic nor Christian, but dissolute or Epicurean.

Julian was again entering upon a course of dissipation. He seemed drawn into it somewhat reluctantly, because, perhaps, he had had at times faint and distant visions of the Bculah which lay beside the still waters and amid the green pastures of a pure life.

Yes, when tired of his gay companions, tired of wandering with them through gambling-hells, tired of witnessing indelicate and wanton exhibitions at the theatres, public dancing-gardens, and students' dancing-halls, and tired of wine and all things which he had been taught, as a child, to avoid as evil, he would turn aside, and with the brother of his childhood wander, arm in arm, along some quiet way. And as he walked

thus with Paul, listening now as the latter spoke of the loved ones at home, and then as he spoke of some good man he had recently met or some charitable institution he had lately visited, and again as he told some simple tale of distress he had relieved or wished to relieve,—tales he never told to other ears than Julian's, and to his in no boasting spirit, but partly because Julian led him to speak of them, and partly because of his simple and unwavering faith in the sympathy and generosity of his brother's heart,—as he listened to the musical tones of that brother's voice as he told these things, and looked into the depths of his clear and calm eyes, he would catch a passing glimpse of the bright and peaceful land that awaits the virtuous man. At such moments he would be tempted to cry out, "Oh, my brother, take me with you! Let us travel together as of yore. Only let me get into the road with *you*, for mine ends I know not where!"

But the ever-present shadow of doubt on the one hand, and on the other a picture of the future, as his worldly and ambitious soul would have it, rising ever a glittering mirage in the desert of his life, would seal his lips, and turn his steps again adown the road which was leading him he knew not whither.

One evening he was wandering listlessly and alone in the brilliantly illuminated walks of the Mabilles. Strains of music filled the perfumed air of the gardens; on every side was gayety, and here and there were groups of merry dancers. Julian wandered from group to group, now attracted by the bright eyes and graceful movements of some pretty dancer, and now he stops spell-bound listening to the soft but stirring strains of some accomplished band.

Again he wanders on, but no longer listlessly, for he has a companion. A bright eye and a coquettish mouth she has, a merry laugh, too, yet always subdued, even amidst the unbridled license of the free and easy Mabilles. Poor girl! she has no past nor future, for she dares not look back to the one nor forward to the other; like the gilded butterfly of summer, she lives only for the present.

Julian was pleased with her pretty face, her grace and her naturalness, and, like another butterfly, chose to forget the past, to shut out the future, and to yield himself to the present.

Thus they wandered on through the foliage-covered walks, by the playing fountains, by the groups of merry dancers, and on through rose-scented gardens; wandered on and on, and then, at last, out from the gay Mabilie into the lamp-lit streets of the great city; out from the glamour of the false within to the stern shadows of the real without. Yet these saw no shadows then, because they would not. Poor wanderers! One groping in darkness because no one dared lead her to the light, and the other because he *would* mistake darkness for light.

Wanderers they were, and forgetful of themselves, yet not forgotten. In the far-off home of the young man he was not forgotten; nor did the brother near at hand forget, ere he closed his eyes that night, the prayer, long since familiar grown, "God bless my brother!" Was the other forgotten? Had the erring girl, she whose past was a blank, whose future was a starless night, no one to plead for her before Heaven's high throne? No father, no mother, whose faith in God was still unshaken despite the fall of their child? No brother or sister of her childhood, whose feet had been taught to shun the road hers had travelled? None of these there were, perhaps. But where were the followers of Him, who had been taught to love their neighbors as themselves? Did the fathers in the church, on that night, think their duty done when they had prayed for those of their own households, their own churches, and their own mission fields? If so, then their lesson had been poorly learned. Did Christian women, on that night, lay themselves down to sleep beneath the shelter of their own quiet and happy homes without hearing the despairing cry that went forth from the hearts of thousands of their fallen sisters? Or, hearing it, did they turn from it with a hard and pitiless scorn? If so, then may Christ have pity upon them, and yet touch their hearts with compassion for those whom, while He was upon earth, he turned aside to pity and to save. It may be that none of all these that night thought of the outcast; but was there no heart in all the universe that cared for her? Poor waif!—was she shut out from the hearts of heaven, as well as from those of earth? Perhaps not; but rather let it be hoped that He who sits at the right hand of God, seeing her neglected, forgotten, or despised by all her fellows, would Himself remember, pity, and pray for her.

In the gray mist of the next day's dawn, Julian was walking alone through the almost silent streets. He stopped at a café, and got a drink of wine and a cigar. Again he stopped at the foreign mail office, and took out a package of letters. Thrusting these into his coat-pocket, he walked on out towards the open country.

He walked out to the then silent boulevards, and sat down where he could see the gray mists rising up from the yellow Seine. Smoking his cigar, and with his feet resting upon the seat, he sat for some minutes, idly looking towards the river.

At length he drew forth the package of letters. Two of them were directed to himself; one in the well-known calligraphy of his mother, the other in the stiff handwriting of a child. He put those addressed to Paul back in his pocket, and sat idly holding the other two, looking first at one superscription and then at the other. Presently his mother's was placed with those to Paul in his pocket, and opening the one superscribed in a child's hand, he read:

"MY DEAR JULIE,—Your last letter to me, written soon after you reached Paris, was so interesting. I have read it at least a dozen times. Every day I wish that we could be there with you and Paul. Perhaps our time will come one of these days.

"Last Sunday was a very interesting day to us here, for then, after the morning service, Bertha and I, with several others, were baptized. I will not tell you about it, as I am quite confident mother has already done so in the letter she has just written. There is another reason, too, why I shouldn't say much about it; it is because I'm not sure that you feel any interest in such things. The rest of us do, I know, but then the thought will sometimes come into my mind, 'Does Julie care for these things?'"

Julian's eyes read no further, but went back and retraced the last sentence, "The rest of us do, I know, but then the thought will sometimes come into my mind, 'Does Julie care for these things?'" Then the hand which held the letter fell back against the seat, and the eyes looked out again towards the sombre river.

As he sat there idly, dreamily looking into the gloomy

mists, he saw again the old vision, seen only a few years ago in Athens, but which seemed to come to him now as from the depth of many years. Now, as then, he saw Paul and himself travelling together the same highway; and now, as then, he saw them reach a place where the road divided; and now, as then, he saw them part company there, and each go his own way. But, as he watched the figure of his brother, he saw now, what the other vision did not show, that he was presently joined by two others, Bertha and Hattie, and then he saw the three walking on and up the road together.

There was an impulse in his heart to rise up and follow them, but just then the laughing face of the Mabile girl came before his eyes, and hid the three from view. She held in her hand a goblet of ruby-colored wine, which she put to his lips, but he waved her away. And now the scene was changed: he saw the four at Innisfel, and they were sitting out on the portico, as he had seen them many times before. He noted upon the face of each an expression of sorrow. Hattie was seated upon the steps, with a portfolio in her lap, on which she was writing. She raised her head and looked towards him, and he saw, besides sorrow, a look of reproach in the pure, soft eyes.

And now a bank of golden-bordered cloud seemed to roll between the home group and himself, and on this cloud he saw printed, in large and bright capitals, the single word *Doubt*. The sun was now shining upon the mists, which quickly rose and vanished before his dispelling beams.

Putting Hattie's letter in his pocket with the others, he retraced his steps, nor stopped until within his brother's room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MARABLE GUARDS.

JULIAN and Paul protracted their stay in Paris. Towards the close of the year they began to see something of the dark cloud which was then gathering above their much-loved land. They had been distant, but interested, spectators of the Presidential contest which had just resulted in the election of Mr. Lincoln. From that time the mutterings of an approaching storm became more loud and threatening.

Mr. Philip Marable, justly proud of the deeds of his ancestors, and proud, too, of his great and broad country, already honored in every quarter of the globe, and regarded by all peoples as among the first of nations, naturally shrank from disunion, which a large and influential party at the South was urging upon the people of that section as their only safeguard against anticipated spoliation at the hands of the dominant party at the North. But he believed that the several States had the right, under the constitution, to withdraw from the Union, and while he shrank from the exercise of this right, he would yet follow the fortunes of his State with an ardor equal to that of her most devoted son.

In view of the unsettled condition of affairs at home, and the threatened contest between the North and the South, Mr. Marable wrote to his sons to return home. This summons they obeyed with alacrity, reaching Innisfel in the latter part of January, 1861.

It was a happy day for the household at Innisfel when it was again reunited by the return of its well-beloved absentees.

The young men found no change in their father or mother. Bertha had grown more full and womanly, while Hattie, now in her fifteenth year, and at that age when girls grow most rapidly, was a half-head taller than when they went away. Though at the age when most girls are awkward, she was still full of grace and beauty, because still a happy, artless child.

She was a child, yet she blushed, perhaps unconsciously, when these tall, handsome young men greeted her with a kiss, as they had always done when leaving or returning home. She had always regarded them as her brothers, yet knowing all the time that they were not. Paul met her before Julian did. As he looked upon the nearly grown little maiden, a sense of the possible injustice there might be in kissing her flitted through his mind; but thinking (and the thought was generous to her) that she would not understand his hesitation, he did not hesitate. Julian could only follow his example.

The young men had much to tell and much to hear: much to tell of what they had seen in foreign lands, though their letters had been frequent and full; and much to hear of old friends, such details as seldom find their way into letters.

They learned that Mennie Briggs, after keeping herself closely at home for a few months, appeared one morning at the Sunday-school connected with the church to which the Marables belonged, since which time she had attended regularly both the Sunday-school and church services. A marked change had come into her life, and she was gradually winning the confidence and esteem of all who knew her.

They learned that Will Duke had continued to prosper, and that, not only on account of his energy and forethought, but, more than these, on account of the reputation he had acquired for business integrity, he was winning success.

They learned that John Colbert was diligently attending to his farming interests, having almost given up his fox-hunting. That during their absence he had paid but few visits to Innisfel, and all these, Hattie mischievously let out, had occurred during Bertha's vacations. At this the eyes of all were ungenerously turned upon Bertha, who said innocently, yet with a pretty blush,—

“If the brothers were not here to hunt foxes with him, perhaps the sister would, you know.”

Yes, they all knew, and, with a little laugh at the girl's happy explanation, went on with the conversation.

They learned something, too, of Kennon Macdermot which surprised them a little; they could not understand why Kennon had made no mention of it in any of his letters to Paul. It was that he had paid John Colbert a visit about six months before, on one afternoon of which he came over to Innisfel,

stayed to tea, and remained so long thereafter that he accepted the invitation of his host and hostess to spend the night there, thus protracting his visit until after breakfast the next day.

"And just to think," said Bertha, "that I was away at school."

"Yes, he was very much disappointed, no doubt," said Julian.

"I was not thinking of his disappointment, but of my own; of course he was disappointed," replied the laughing girl.

But interesting as the details of foreign travel were, and interested as they were to hear of the movements, prospects, and successes of their friends, there was one subject which stirred more deeply than any of these the hearts of the Innisfel household, and especially the naturally martial spirits of its two young men. This was the storm which was rapidly driving the two sections of the Union into fratricidal war.

The atmosphere seemed filled with the clangor of arms. Throughout the country military companies were being organized and equipped. Throughout the country, both at the North and at the South, hot-headed politicians, sometimes patriots, but often crafty demagogues, whose only hope to rise was in revolution, constantly added fuel to that fierce flame which had suddenly burst forth from embers that had been smouldering for fifty years. Every breeze came laden with the din of preparation for the hostile shock.

WAR was blazoned upon the sky, was stamped upon the clouds, was muttered in the thunder, and traced by the zigzag lightning in its course. WAR was whispered by the sighing trees, was moaned forth in the rushing river, was echoed back from ocean's angry waves, and shrieked aloud in the wild blast of the tempest. WAR gleamed in men's eyes, was 'larumed in their voices, absorbed all their thoughts, and directed all their energies,—even their prayers went up laden, or fell down burdened, with war.

Two companies of infantry had already been formed in Rome, while in the country adjacent a cavalry company had been organized, of which John Colbert was first lieutenant. When Colbert heard of the return of his two friends, he was sorry that the organization of his company had not taken place later, for then, he thought, one or both of them could have been

elected officers in it. Julian and Paul, however, much as they loved horseback exercise, preferred the infantry service, believing that it offered the surest road to promotion. They proposed enlisting in one of the companies already organized in the city; but their father dissuaded them from this, and, at his suggestion, they began, a few weeks after their return, to organize a new company.

This company was composed for the most part of men living in the vicinity of Innisfel. Many of them were poor men, and all of them had been either witnesses or recipients of that constant stream of kindness going forth from the rich man's house to the humbler dwellings around. Even before Philip Marable proposed to equip the company at his own expense, its members had agreed that its name should be the "Marable Guards." At its organization, Julian was elected its captain, and Paul its first lieutenant, without opposition. It received a few recruits from town, among which were Will Duke and Tim Piper. The former was elected its second lieutenant, and the latter was made one of its non-commissioned officers.

Not until the company was fully equipped, and had become somewhat familiar with military evolutions and the manual of arms, was it offered for service to the Confederate government. It was at once accepted, and ordered to report to General Hunter, then in command of the forces in and around Norfolk, Virginia.

Just one week before the company was to leave, Mr. Marable gave it a dinner. The place selected was a grove near the mill, and close to the beautiful creek which turned it. Besides the members of the company, all their families were invited, and, in addition to these, a few outside friends. Among the latter were the Colberts, and Mennie and Rabie Briggs, whom Lieutenant Duke brought out from Rome.

In the forenoon there was a company drill—the company furnishing its own fife and drummers—in an open field across the road. The drill was followed by several speeches. First, one by Philip Marable, full of good sense and good counsel; then a few sentences were spoken by Julian, full of that fiery pathos he knew so well how to express; and lastly, was a longer speech by Paul, more temperate than his brother's, and more fervid than his father's. The zeal which glowed in his own soul, tinging his words with flame, kindled a kindred

fervor in the hearts of his hearers. And when, at length, he alluded to the probable casualties of war, his pathetic sentences came forth so gilded with glory, with so beautiful and ravishing a radiance, that few there were who heard him who were not ready then to lay their lives a willing sacrifice upon the altar of their country.

After the speeches, the large crowd repaired to the tables, whereon was spread a substantial repast, to which full justice was done.

After dinner the crowd broke into small groups, and were soon dispersed through the grove and along the rocky and picturesque bank of the creek. Here and there, too, were couples, a young man and a young woman, who were using this as, perhaps, the last opportunity to speak together privately that would occur to them before a separation, the length of which they knew not.

"John, I want to introduce you to a pretty girl from Rome, and one of the best girls, too, in the place," said Paul to John Colbert, as he chanced to meet him in the grove.

"Who is she, Paul?" asked Colbert.

"Miss Mennie Briggs. You may see her standing there near to my mother."

"Yes, she is pretty," answered Colbert, but in an indifferent tone.

"And yonder you may see her sister. She is with Lieutenant Duke."

"I am acquainted with her. Julian or Duke, I forget which, introduced me."

"Come, now," said Paul, taking him by the arm, "let me make you acquainted with the other."

"I am at your service; though I did not care much about making any new acquaintances to-day," he said, as he followed Paul.

Mennie had been herself all day; not her old, but her new self. Bertha had made her and Rabie acquainted, soon after their arrival, with the two Misses Colbert. There was nothing now about Mennie which could make any one suspect her of trying to catch the attention of the other sex; nothing either in her manners or appearance. She had her old sprightliness of manner without its levity; and while there was more simplicity in her attire than there used to be, she was still dressed

with taste,—some would say with a purer taste,—and with a view, no doubt, to what was becoming and attractive.

Notwithstanding the fact that John Colbert's eyes and thoughts had that day constantly wandered to another, and that he was longing for a private interview with that other, still the vivacity and charming grace of Mennie pleased him, and made him almost forget, for a time, the interview he was bent upon having with Bertha Marable.

At length, towards the close of the afternoon, he found the opportunity he had so ardently coveted. As he sat with Bertha on a ledge of rock which overlooked the mill and its surroundings, and he became conscious that the moment he had so eagerly wished for had come, his self-confidence, for the first time in his life, deserted him. Bertha's quick eye noticed the unusual indecision of his manner, and with a woman's instinct divined its cause. She arrived at her conclusion the more readily because, long before this occurrence, he had given her cause to make her suspect his partiality for her. She would now have liked much to prevent the declaration she believed pending, but knew not how best to do it.

"Your company will leave in two days, I believe, Mr. Colbert, for the northern part of Alabama?"

Bertha said this rather to end the silence, which was getting to be uncomfortably long, than for the sake of the information it might elicit, as she well knew what time his company was to leave. If she had had time to consider her words she would have spoken differently, for they opened the way for the young man, into which he at once entered. Recovering now, partially, his confidence, and looking into the blue eyes of the girl, he said,—

"Yes, we leave in two days; to-morrow I will join the camp below Rome, and, therefore, will not see you again after this evening. There is something, Miss Bertha, that I want to tell to you before I leave. It is an old, old secret,—my secret, and the only one I ever had. I have known it now for nearly two years,—ever since Mr. Kennon Macdermot paid his first visit to Innisfel. I learned then what I had suspected long before, Miss Bertha, that I loved you! I felt it for the first time, I suppose, because I fancied, after I saw him and yourself together, that he, too, loved you." At this Bertha's face flushed, but she remained silent. Colbert went on: "Ah, Miss Bertha,

I tried to persuade myself that I was mistaken in regard to my feelings. I did this because I was almost certain that you would never love me. I stayed away from you as much as I could, and tried to think of you as too proud to care anything for the love of a plain man like John Colbert. But whenever I met you, your bright smile and cheerful words, and when it was at your father's house, your frank manner in meeting and welcoming me, showed me that you would not, at least, scorn the honest love of an honest man; and that if you could not return it you would only be sorry that it had been given."

As he paused here, Bertha said, interrogatively,—

"I have never said anything, Mr. Colbert, to make you think that—that your love was returned?"

"Not one word, Miss Bertha; and I now feel assured of that which I have long suspected—that it is not. Yet I could not go away, to be gone I know not how long, without telling you my secret,—without telling you of the love which has so long filled my heart, and asking that you will sometimes think of me as one who is trying to do his duty."

The tender-hearted Bertha could not restrain her tears, though she tried hard to do so. She assured him that he would not be forgotten, but would be often thought of as a true and brave man, and one whom she was glad to hold among the number of her friends. After this he regained something of his old spirit, and when, a short time afterward, they rejoined their friends, no one would have suspected the nature of the interview just had between them.

In another part of the grove that afternoon were Will Duke and Rabie Briggs. They wandered slowly among the cliffs by the creek, and then away, until the ash and water-oaks hid them from view. When they came back there was a flush mantling the dark face of the girl, which would have told to any one curious enough to have watched her closely that she had not listened with indifference to Will's story of his love.

Towards sunset the company again went through a few evolutions, after which the crowd dispersed.

A week later, after many tender adieus, in the midst of many falling tears, and yet in the midst of brave huzzas, martial strains, and waving of hats and handkerchiefs, the Marable Guards took its departure from the Rome depot to join the Army of Virginia.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MALVERN HILL.

ON reaching Portsmouth, the Marable Guards became a part of the Third Georgia Regiment of volunteers, A. R. Wright, of Georgia, being its colonel.

The Confederate forces, stationed in the vicinity of Norfolk and Portsmouth, found few hardships connected with their camp life; at least this was the case until its novelty had worn away. Though living in tents, they nevertheless possessed many of the comforts, with some of the luxuries, of home. Most of the messes were provided with cooks, young negro men, brought from home, having first received some instruction in their new duties; while other messes were able to hire cooks in the neighborhood of the camp. Mr. Marable sent with his sons the boy Tony, whose name has before occurred in this history, Mrs. Marable having duly instructed him in the culinary art. Tony having been raised about the house, and being anxious to follow his young masters, made them a faithful and efficient servant.

A few months after the Marable Guards reached Virginia, the battle of Manassas was fought. The Confederates had, a short time before, sustained some reverses in West Virginia, but the success at Manassas made these reverses appear slight, and filled nearly all Southerners with anticipations of a speedy and successful issue to the conflict. How imperfectly did they know the North! or they would have known that this blow at Manassas would only serve to fully arouse the hitherto half-awakened giant. Those soldiers who had not yet heard the hiss of a bullet or shriek of a bomb, as was the case with those around Norfolk, feared that the war would close, and this bit of excitement, this something to tell to their children in after-years, would not be afforded them. Ah, little did they know then of the four years ahead of them!—years full of privation and of desperate struggling; full of ruin, and full of heartbreak-

ing anguish,—years that must ever remain the darkest in the annals of American history, stained and weighted down as they were with fratricidal blood.

One day, after they had been in camp two months, Julian and Paul were returning from a visit to Norfolk. Just after entering the lines of their own encampment, and while passing close to the guard-tent, an uncombed head, with a dirt-be-grimed face, thrust itself from the door of the tent and called out,—

“Lieutenant Marable!”

The brothers stopped.

“It is only Bill Camp,” said Julian. “He wants you to release him again, of course. I would let him stay there his time out; you only spoil the fellow, Paul, by your kindness.”

Paul made no reply, but stood looking at the rough face of the man, as if considering what to do.

“Fur God’s sake, cap’en, don’t be too hard on a feller,” began Camp, in a whining tone. “I knows Lieutenant Marable has tuk me outen this place three times afo’, but if he’ll only git me outen it wunst mo’, jes’ *this* time, I swear——”

“No, Camp,” said Paul, interrupting him, “I don’t want any promise from you now. All your promises to me you have broken, and I don’t want you to break any more. I am going to try to get you out again; and if, at the end of a month, you can come to me and say that you have not touched a drop of liquor in that time, then, if you want still to make me a promise, I will hear you. I am sorry for you, Camp.”

The brothers passed on, Julian going to his tent, but Paul going to headquarters, where he succeeded in obtaining an order for the release of Bill Camp.

Exactly one month passed, when private Camp called his lieutenant aside.

“Lieutenant Marable,” he said, “you said you wus sorry for me,—fur Bill Camp,—an’ you wus, too, fur I seed it in your face. ’Twas jes’ a month ago to-day; you sed then if I didn’t drink any liquor fur a month, an’ would come to you a wantin’ to make a promise, that you’d lis’n to me. I’ve come to make it.”

“You have drank, then, no liquor during the past month?” asked Paul.

“Not a drop, lieutenant.”

"Then I will hear your promise, Bill. What is it?"

"It's nothin' mo' nor less, lieutenant, than that I'll never take another drap o' spirits so long as I live."

"That is a great promise, Bill; and no one but a *man* can keep it. You want to prove to me now that you are a man. *I believe that you will do it.*"

A few days after this conversation, Colonel Wright was ordered with his regiment to the coast of North Carolina. The regiment landed upon Roanoke Island, which they fortified with forts and breastworks. After spending six or eight months here, during which it saw a little active service, it returned to Portsmouth. At South Mills, three months later, it met and repulsed a column of Federals advancing from Elizabeth City towards Portsmouth. In another month Norfolk and Portsmouth were evacuated; the troops which had held them being removed to Richmond, and incorporated into the Army of Northern Virginia.

The Third Georgia Regiment was advanced to the front on the day when occurred the battle of Fair Oaks, but took a position just in rear of the contending lines. After the battle it formed a part of the most advanced line of the Confederate army.

The Marable Guards had now been in service for more than a year. Its captain and first lieutenant had started out with the confidence and esteem of their men. Owing to Julian's natural reserve and pride, he did not grow much during this time in the affections of his men; he retained, however, their respect and confidence, as they believed him to be cool and brave in danger, and impartial and just, though strict, in his dealings with themselves. Paul, on the other hand, had endeared himself to every member of the company. If one was sick, Paul went to see him, and saw that he had proper attention. He visited those who were in the hospital, and saw that they were duly cared for. If a difficulty arose between the men, he was prompt to interfere, and see that it was settled justly and amicably.

Nearly a month passed, and the armies confronting each other at Richmond maintained pretty much the same position they held at the close of the battle of Fair Oaks. And then news reached the Confederates of several brilliant successes gained by General Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Val-

ley. A few more days elapsed, and suddenly sharp and heavy firing was heard on the left of the Confederate lines. This firing continued all day. Stonewall Jackson had suddenly joined his victorious forces to those of Lee, and, advancing straight upon the Federals posted at Mechanicsville, commenced that memorable series of conflicts known as the Seven Days' Battles around Richmond. Loud and prolonged cheering, carried along the Confederate line from left to right, announced the success of their attack upon Mechanicsville. Early the next morning the battle was resumed by another advance of the Confederates, when was fought the battle of Cold Harbor. Again was the Federal line steadily driven back. The third, fourth, and fifth days' battles resulted as those on the first and second,—in the Federal line being doubled upon itself, and steadily driven towards the James River.

On the afternoon of the sixth day the Federals made a stand on Malvern Hill, two miles from the James. The stand was well taken. The summit of the hill was wooded, while on the side next the Confederates the approach to its top was across an open field, with a gentle slope. The breadth of this field was three-fourths of a mile. To attempt to cross it in the face of a strong foe, and with an army decimated and exhausted by five days' fighting, looked like madness. Yet the order to advance came, and it must be obeyed.

Colonel Wright, now in command of the brigade to which his regiment belonged, after uttering a few stirring words to his men, dismounted and placed himself in front of the Third Georgia. Julian and Paul looked upon each other, for they might never look upon each other again in life. Then the gallant colonel, raising his intrepid voice, shouted to his men to follow him. The line did not hesitate for a second, but with a shout started forward. This brigade was supported by a general advance of the Confederate line, yet it had by far the most important and dangerous position in the assault.

The Federals reserved their fire until the Confederate line was half across the field, when it had come within easy musket range. Then suddenly a terrific tempest of ball, grape-shot, and canister struck the advancing column, and made it reel like a drunken man. The fearless Wright, wounded, yet undismayed, raised his sword above his head, and, shouting to

his men, still endeavored to lead the desperate charge. It was useless. Nothing could withstand that storm of lead and iron. The line halted, wavered, and then fell back in disorder to the protection of the woods from which it had started out. Nothing but the most strenuous efforts of some of the officers prevented the retreat from ending in a rout.

Close to the main hill where the principal part of the Federal force was posted, and on its left, was a smaller eminence, likewise wooded, whereon were stationed several batteries of artillery. The Confederate officers believing, after a hasty survey of the field, that the possession of this hill would make them masters of the field, it was determined to make this eminence the chief object of another attack. For this purpose a call was made for a body of volunteers who would lead the assault. The intention was that this select body should be supported by a division, and that the attention of the enemy should be drawn from the object of attack by an advance with the whole line.

It devolving upon Wright's brigade to furnish the volunteers called for, Colonel Wright first addressed himself to his own regiment. After getting the attention of his men, in tones undaunted he cried out,—

"I want volunteers to take yon battery," pointing with his sword, as he spoke, to the coveted hill.

There was a moment's silence, for the desperate character of the undertaking was well understood by his men. Then there was a movement on the left of the Marable Guards, and Lieutenant Paul Marable stepped to the front; the next instant Sergeant Tim Piper stepped forth, and placed himself just in the rear of his lieutenant. Again there was a pause, when a murmur of admiration ran along the line. And then others stepped forward, one or two at a time, until, the number who thus volunteered amounting to about four hundred, the colonel signified that he wanted no more. The captains who had stepped to the front—and Julian was among the number—he ordered back into the line, as he intended to place the leading column under the command of Lieutenant Marable.

Paul having quickly formed his men into line, stationed his subordinates, and given a few brief directions, at a signal from his commanding officer started forward. He led his

men obliquely across the field, in the direction of the smaller eminence. His directions to his men had been to watch for the smoke of the cannon; that as soon as this was seen, to fall upon their faces, and then, when the volley had passed above them, to immediately rise and advance at a double-quick step. Again the enemy reserved his fire until Paul's company was half the distance to the point of attack.

They had advanced so far at a quick-step. As soon, however, as the first discharge from the battery had passed over their prostrate bodies, they rose up simultaneously, and keeping close on the heels of their golden-haired leader, rushed forward with a shout. They went forward, but left their brave comrades at every step, for an incessant blaze of musketry flashed along the brow of the larger hill, now darkening with the shades of night. Still Paul and his intrepid followers pressed on. Once, and then again, discharges of grape and canister from the battery he was attacking tore through his line, making yet wider the gaps in his thinned ranks. And then, at last, ere the smoke of the third discharge has cleared away, with one hundred and fifty men at his back, he bursts upon the astonished gunners. The latter gave way, and for one moment Paul was master of the position. It was only for a moment; ere he could form again his disordered line, his tired men were fiercely assailed by a reserve force of the enemy with fixed bayonets. The rest of the brigade should have been near enough to support him, but owing to the fact that its valiant leader had, in the first part of the advance, been borne from the field wounded, it had been again driven back. A few, however, of the Marable Guards, with Julian and Duke at their head, pressed forward, with the forlorn hope of still bearing succor to the daring band which had preceded them.

In the mean time a desperate hand-to-hand conflict was going on among the abandoned field-pieces. Paul threw away his sword and seized a discarded musket, having its bayonet fixed. Being skilled in the bayonet exercise, as were most of his men, he was able to keep his foes at bay, at least for a few moments. Seeing that he was unsupported, and that he could continue the unequal contest only at the sacrifice of all the brave fellows who had followed him, he reluctantly gave the command to fall back. Those in the rear doing this rather too

precipitately, he was left alone and almost surrounded by his enemies. While defending himself against two soldiers who, with bayonets, were attacking him on one side, for one moment his other side was left exposed. At this critical instant a stout soldier raised his weapon and was about to strike down the gallant Paul, when a nimble form, with the quickness of a catamount, sprang forward and parried the descending blow. He saved his lieutenant's life, but at the sacrifice of his own. As Paul turned and saw the body of Tim Piper sinking down beside him, his arms seemed nerved anew, and for a brief while he cleared a space around his fallen friend. Again was he borne backward, but ere he passed the spot where Tim lay, Julian was at his side at the head of the small company which had followed him from the main column. Paul's band having been rallied by this arrival, the position of the combatants was now somewhat changed. The brothers, knowing, however, that this change could last only for a moment, determined to use it in effecting their retreat. Tim was taken up and carried to the rear, and then, with their faces to the foe, they began their hazardous return. The enemy advanced upon them with increased numbers, but not with their former spirit. The regular and well-directed volleys of the retreating party served to check pursuit; while, by taking a course in which, to some extent, they were shielded from the notice of those on the larger hill,—this was after they had ceased firing,—and likewise aided by the shades of night now fallen upon the scene, they succeeded, at length, though not without further loss, in reaching their own line.

During this retreat, Paul maintained himself in that part of the line which was nearest to the enemy. A ball struck the stock of the musket he still bore, shivering it and slightly wounding his hand. Again was he struck. This time he staggered, and would have fallen, had not Will Duke's strong arms caught him. It was too dark for Julian to see this, he being some distance off, but he presently heard the whisper, to him a fearful one,—

“Lieutenant Marable is down.”

With a cramped and icy feeling about his heart, he made his way to where his brother was being borne to what was now, since they had ceased fighting, the front. On reaching him, with a face so blanched that the darkness of the night could

not hide its hue, and with a voice that would falter despite his effort to control it, he asked,—

"Where is your wound, Paul?"

"In my leg, just below the knee," replied Paul, in a languid tone, and then added, more cheerily, "It's nothing serious, Julian; in fact, I don't think it would have brought me down had I not been so exhausted."

As soon as they were safe within the shelter of the wood, Paul had himself placed close beside the dying Tim. After a little delay, a surgeon came. Paul directed him to the other. The surgeon held his lamp over the prostrate man. After a very brief examination he turned to Paul, saying,—

"He is past all help—will be gone in a few minutes. I will now look at your wound."

"Wait a while, doctor," said Paul. "If this brave fellow has only a few minutes, I must give all my attention to him; he may like to send by me some message home."

"Thank you, lieutenant," said Tim's feeble voice, "but let the surgeon attend to your wound; you can speak to me afterwards."

"No, Tim, my wound is slight—only a flesh wound in the leg. Do you suffer much, Tim?"

As Paul said this, he took one of the boy's cold hands in his.

"Not much, lieutenant. I am so glad you are not hurt badly! You might have got off safe if you hadn't tried to bring me with you."

"Don't talk of me, Tim. Can we do anything for you?"

"Nothing. I feel that the doctor is right,—that the end is very near."

"You are not afraid to go, Tim?"

"Oh, no; Christ has showed me how to live. He shows me now how to die. Tell your father so, for he and you led me to Him."

"I will, Tim. And what shall I say to the folks at the mill?"

"The dear folks at the mill, where I have spent so many pleasant Sundays?—tell them that I fought bravely,—did I not, lieutenant?"

"Aye, Tim, you did, as brave as the bravest. What else?"

"Tell them," and the voice grew faint, very faint, "tell them that my last blow was for my country, and—and for you."

"Oh, I will, Tim, my brave boy. What else?"

"Nothing else. Put your hand on my brow, lieutenant,—that way,—that hand so ready to help me once when a poor, scared boy, at Briggs's school; you remember it, lieutenant? It seems but yesterday—that brave hand—I want to feel it resting on me, as I do now, at the very last, the very last."

And thus he died. Calmly and peacefully the brave and gentle spirit passed away; passed from the rough battle-field to the quiet encampment beyond the river.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ANNABEL WINTER.

MR. PHILIP MARABLE, informed by telegraph of the wound Paul had received at Malvern Hill, went immediately to Richmond to see that he had everything necessary to his comfort and well-being. As soon as Paul was able to travel, he obtained a furlough of thirty days, and went home in company with his father.

As long as Paul was disabled by his wound, he enjoyed intensely the pleasures of home, especially those derived from the companionship of its inmates. He visited the miller's family as soon as he was able to do so, and gave them again—he had given them before by letter—the sorrowful details of Tim's death. As strength and activity returned, he be-thought him constantly of his comrades in the hard and comfortless camp. It was not consistent with his accurate ideas of duty to spend his time in luxurious ease while his men were enduring the fatigues and exposures of the camp. He therefore, his strength being fully restored, returned to the army a few days before the expiration of his furlough.

The next month is full of forced marches, of fierce conflicts, of privations, of sickness, of wounds, of death. General Lee pushes his columns northward. The hostile armies meet again on the field of Bull Run, and again the Federals are beaten. Lee pushes his victorious troops across the Potomac. The hills of Maryland now resound with the clash of contending hosts. Again and again, at Harper's Ferry, at Sharpsburg, at Antietam, does its soil drink deep of fratricidal gore. Late at night the tired Confederate, with his hands still grasping his musket, lies down to sleep, but long ere the dawn he is roused up to continue the never-ending fight. During the day, in the midst of shrieking bombs and whirring bullets, he snatches at his haversack, but ere he carries the uncooked meat or adamantine cracker to his famished lips the command comes to advance or to

retreat. During the day the Confederate forces melt away; during the night the trees of the forest are converted into Federals.

The Confederate leader gathers together the shreds of his army, wearied, famished, and ragged, but still undaunted, and, recrossing the Potomac, finds rest for them, at last, on the south side of the Rappahannock.

Julian and Will Duke were both wounded at Antietam, and both went home on furloughs of thirty days. Julian's wound, though not dangerous, was painful and healed slowly. He being too feeble to return to active service at the expiration of his furlough, it was extended twenty days.

The long, hot August days would have seemed to him interminable, and the confinement of his couch would have grown to be unbearable, had he been lying in some ward of a hospital, with no one to wait upon him but strangers; but being in his own pleasant room at Innisfel, and constantly attended by those he loved, it was impossible that the hours could drag. It was always pleasant to have his father come in, infusing into him fresh strength by his cheerful smile and hopeful words. It was pleasant to feel his mother's gentle touch upon the bed as she sought to make him more comfortable, and then to have her bend over and kiss him, as—he could well remember it—she used to do when he was a child. It was very pleasant, too, to have Bertha, and then Hattie, sit beside him, to talk or read to him,—to read some favorite book, or the daily newspaper, or a letter just received from Paul. In the evenings they would sing for him, and, after he could leave his room, play for him on the piano.

One evening, after he became convalescent, and just after he had had a long talk with Bertha, Hattie came in. She sat down as usual close to the head of his bed, and began to run her fingers lightly through his hair. He looked at her long, and with a new light dawning in his eyes.

"It is very pleasant to have that hand on my brow," he said, at length, "but not now, not *now*." Saying this, he took her hand and gently laid it from him, and then turned his face from her.

"Do you want to sleep, Julie?" she asked.

"Yes—and to dream."

After which she quietly withdrew from the room.

When, two weeks later, Julian left Innisfel to return to the army, it was noticed that he did not kiss Hattie.

Autumn came and went. December came, and with it another sharp conflict at Fredericksburg. Paul was again wounded, and again went home on furlough.

Ah, Paul! those days that you spent with the loved ones at Innisfel they will ever remember. They will remember many of the sentences you uttered, many of the walks and rides you took; will remember how, during those long winter evenings, while sitting around the fire in your mother's room, they listened to you tell your varied experiences, not alone amid the stirring scenes of strife, but also those by which you discovered some of man's redeeming virtues. You *did* discover these, because you looked for them. That there were honest and virtuous men in the world, that there were just and merciful men, that some were generous and others grateful, you knew; and you took pleasure in the knowledge.

It was the last week of Paul at home. He was walking with Bertha and Hattie. As they were passing by the little country church-yard, used by most of the families in the neighborhood as a burial-place, they were startled to hear a deep groan proceed from among the graves. It came too distinctly to be mistaken; it was the moan of some one in pain. Paul at once led the way into the enclosure to look for the sufferer. Close beside an old grave, having a plain head-board, and almost covered by the fallen leaves and withered grass around it, they discovered the prostrate form of a man, with an old army blanket wrapped about him. Paul glanced at the head-board which marked the grave, and there read the single name "Jennette;" it bore nothing more, neither date of birth or death. Removing the man's torn and soiled hat, and the leaves which had blown about his face, he recognized, but with some difficulty, in the emaciated form before him, his father's old tenant, Andrew Stockley. His bushy, sandy-colored hair and beard, now well streaked with gray, looked as though they had been long uncared for. The pallor on his shrunken face, and the glassy look in his eyes, revealed to Paul's experienced eye the ghastly presence of death. Getting down beside the man, and putting his hand upon his wrist, he discovered that life was not yet extinct. Bending lower still, he spoke to him.

"A friend has come to help you."

"To bury me!—but who be ye?" spoke the parched lips of the man, as he turned his fading eyes upon Paul in the effort to recognize him.

"I am Paul Marable."

"A Marable!—ye're just in time."

"Time for what?—can I help you?"

"No, no, not that. There's something I must tell ye. I came to do it, but could get no further than here,—*her* grave. I see two others,—women?"

"My sisters, Bertha and Hattie."

"Hattie! Would I could see her wunst mo'! Whur's the ring, chile?"

"This is Andrew Stockley, Hattie," explained Paul. "You remember when he gave you the ring. Hold your hand to him and let him touch it."

When Hattie had done so, he said,—

"The same. Keep it fur the sake o' her. She *did* like ye—that's so."

"For whose sake?" asked the tender voice of Hattie.

"Her'n, who lies here. Call me Andy, and speak to me wunst agin, will ye?"

"I am so sorry for you, Andy!" said the girl.

"The same voice.—Sorry! Ye learned it o' the Marables; 'twouldn't ha' been so in yer other home. Chile, I done ye no wrong to bring ye here; but I promised *her*, afo' she died, to give ye back to yer mother, an' I must do it."

He paused a moment as if to recover strength, then went on, speaking in a whisper, and making many pauses.

"Yer father is Horris Winter, of Augustey. I—an' my woman—tuk ye off. We come by Athens, an' lef' yer clo's—that ye had on—with old Chaffey Phipps—my woman's aunt."

He stopped, and lay perfectly still for a little while. The others likewise kept silent, so absorbed were they in pondering the revelation just received; their imaginations, too, were busy in suggesting questions they hardly dared to ask. The silence was broken by Hattie, who asked, with colorless lips,—

"What of my mother, Andy?"

"She lives," whispered the dying man,—"*wus* livin' a year ago. Raise my head higher, Master Paul; my strength is goin' fast."

As Paul changed the position of his head he saw a ghastly wound in his neck. Stockley continued,—

"Thar', that'll do. Lis'en. Tell Horris Winter—Jeems Ansley never robbed him. Tell him—he wronged me—fur it wus along o' him they stole my boy—an then I stole his chile." After another pause he spoke once more: "Tell Chaffey I'm dead!"

These were his last words. There, upon the grave of the woman whom he had once loved, and about whom, doubtless, his memories of the past were wont to gather, he died.

Paul and his two sisters—for Hattie was still his sister—passed in silence away from the dead man, and out through the gate of the enclosure. Suddenly Bertha stopped, and stretching out her arms to Hattie, cried out,—

"Oh, Hattie, my darling! how can I give you up? You must *not* leave us!"

Hattie only answered this appeal by throwing herself into her sister's arms, and sobbing. Paul stood by, for once in his life irresolute. After a while, taking Hattie by the hand, he said,—

"Our sister will do what is right, though it tear her own and our hearts to do it."

Bertha recovering her self-possession, they walked on towards the house.

Arriving there, Paul's first act was to send a number of men to remove the body of the fisherman from the churchyard; he then lost no time in acquainting his father and mother with the scene which had just occurred there. When he told the name of Hattie's father, Mr. Marable started, and then looked searchingly at the child.

"It is so," he murmured, more to himself than to the others, and with his eyes still fixed on her, "it is so; she is *her* child. How often, often, have I seen her mother in her! Lucy, you have heard me speak of the resemblance. Strange, that I should rear *her* child,—the child of her and Horace Winter! I did it ignorantly, God knows; without a suspicion of the truth. I never heard that they had lost a child. But go on, Paul."

When Paul concluded his story, Mrs. Marable opened her arms to Hattie, not trusting herself to speak. Hattie answered this mute anticipation of the coming separation as she had an-

swered the outspoken one of Bertha. The rest of the family turned away for a time to conceal their tears.

Hattie, sinking into a low chair, rested her head on her mother's lap, as she had so often done when a child. While sitting thus, she murmured,—

"My own sweet mamma!—how can I give you up?"

"Don't talk so, my darling," replied Mrs. Marable, through her tears. "I do not intend for you to give me up: only now you will have two mammas instead of one."

"Do you think, mamma, I will ever love the other as I do you?"

"I hope so, darling. I am sure that you will try, and will try to make her love you."

"Did you know her, mamma?"

"Not personally. Mr. Marable knew her well."

Poor Hattie! had she known of the feud which once existed between her natural and her foster father, and how it still lingered in the heart of the former, her sorrow, and the sorrow of them all, would have been much greater as they anticipated the impending separation.

No one knew when or how Stockley came there. In his pocket was found a paper, being a transfer of private James Ansley from a hospital in Richmond, Virginia, to one in Augusta, Georgia. This paper, taken in connection with what he said of James Ansley just before his death, convinced Mr. Marable that the name Stockley was an assumed one. He was buried by the side of his wife; and the head-board that marked his grave bore simply his name, the name of the regiment to which he belonged, and the date of his death.

Mr. Marable wrote that night to Chaffey Phipps to send to him *by express* the clothing of an infant, the child of Horace Winter, left with her by James Ansley and his wife, now about fourteen years ago. His letter also gave a brief account of Ansley's death.

In four days the package was received. It was an interesting moment to them all, but especially to Hattie, as they stood around and looked upon those little garments, the summer garments of a child one year old. The dress was white, and richly trimmed and embroidered. The under-garments, likewise, were almost as costly and beautiful as such garments could be made. There was but one slipper, a tiny slipper of

white satin, embroidered with silk. On the under-garments, still plainly legible, was the name "Annabel Winter."

"And do we lose even our darling's name with her?" said Mrs. Marable.

"No, mamma," answered Hattie, quickly, "you will lose neither; for I am to come to see you often, you know, and I intend to keep the old name."

At the bottom of the package they found a light gold chain, to which was attached a locket containing a portrait. Mrs. Marable handed it to her husband. He looked at it a moment, then handed it to Hattie, saying,—

"It is your mother's picture."

It was a miniature painting, on ivory. Hattie gazed long and silently on the beautiful face; then handed it to Bertha.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the latter. "And, Hattie, it is almost as good a portrait of you as it can be."

After Mrs. Marable and Paul had both looked at it, the former, taking it from the hands of her son, placed the chain around Hattie's neck, letting the locket fall upon the upper part of her breast. She said, as soon as she had arranged it to her satisfaction,—

"You left your mother with this chain and locket so, and so return to her."

Mr. Marable did not write to Horace Winter until the day before he started with Hattie for Augusta. Paul went with them, for it was the day on which he was to start for Virginia; besides, Mr. Marable wished him to be present, as he could tell better than any one else the confession of Ansley.

It was a sorrowful farewell which Hattie bade to Innisfel, and those of its loved inmates she left there,—those so long her mother and sister.

Late in the afternoon of the following day, Philip Marable and his son, with the long-lost child of Horace Winter, were walking up the broad avenue of Travis Square. They were expected, for, as soon as they had ascended the stone steps and entered the portico, the door was thrown open by Mrs. Winter herself. One searching, anxious look she cast at Hattie, and then springing towards her, with a wild cry of joy, she clasped her in her arms.

A form appeared just within the doorway, and a cold voice said,—

"Will you all walk in? I dislike scenes."

The cold tones of the man sent a chill to the sympathizing hearts of Philip Marable and his son. Hattie did not hear them.

Mr. Marable advanced to the threshold, where Mr. Winter received him with a cold and formal salutation. Paul was then introduced, after which Mr. Winter led the way into a parlor on the right. Mrs. Winter had released her daughter on hearing her husband's voice, yet still held her by the hand. As soon as the others had passed into the parlor, she said, in a low tone,—

"We will now go to your father. Don't be surprised or hurt if he fails to show you much affection. It is not like him to be demonstrative."

The letter of Mr. Marable to Horace Winter had left no room for any doubt to linger in his mind in regard to his child's identity; yet there was a coldness in his reception of her which was painful to those who witnessed it, and especially to the daughter, despite her mother's preparatory words. He did take her by the hand, and did speak brief words of acknowledgment and welcome, but he did it as if he was going through a form which circumstances rendered necessary, and which he did not wish protracted. And yet the heart of the proud man was not altogether callous: it did not thus close itself against his child with impunity: despite his efforts, nature could not be so easily stifled or put aside as he had expected. The smiting of his conscience, caused by that parental yearning in his heart which he had outraged, made his last words tremble. He turned from her hastily and asked the two gentlemen, who were still standing, to be seated.

In the mean time Mrs. Winter had spoken to Mr. Marable, and been introduced to Paul. Though her manner was quiet, there was a tremor in her voice when she spoke to the father.

Hattie returned to her mother, and the two sat down on a sofa, holding each other by the hand. They were mother and daughter, and had known and understood each other always.

When they were all seated, Mr. Marable, at the request of Mr. Winter, stated all that he knew in connection with Hattie's abduction. He told when and under what circumstances the fisherman calling himself Andrew Stockley came to his place. He then gave an account of Jennette's death, and

then of the efforts he had made to find the parents of the child thus entrusted to his care. Nor did he omit to state how he was misled to some extent by Stockley, the truth of whose story he then had no cause to suspect. Before he ceased speaking, he asked his son to narrate the circumstances of the fisherman's death, giving the words of his confession as nearly as possible. This Paul did in a clear, yet succinct manner, omitting nothing at all essential to the completeness of the testimony. Nor did he forget to repeat the dead man's message to Mr. Winter, which asserted his innocence of that crime for which he had been tried and convicted.

There was a short pause at the conclusion of Paul's story. It was broken by Mrs. Winter, who, observing then, for the first time, the necklace and locket on her daughter's neck, called the attention of her husband to them. The chain and locket had been a present from him just before they were married, and when the picture was put into it he had called it beautiful, but now the sight of it stirred no interest in him, at least none that was visible.

The mother and daughter then left the room, to which they returned, after a few moments, bringing with them a bundle.

The mother's trembling hands opened it, and then began to lay out upon the centre-table a child's faded garments. Her hands seemed to touch them reverently, while tears gathered in her eyes and fell upon the time-stained linen. Nor did the gray eyes of the father look listlessly upon these mementos of the past. When he saw the single slipper he was interested enough to rise from his seat and bring from a closet in the room another exactly like it. Laying it by the side of the other, he said,—

"Here is the other one, Annabel. It was found in a bateau on the river, and so made us think that you were drowned." This was done and said quietly, and in an every-day manner, yet it was a partial yielding of the selfish and unjust spirit which ruled him to his parental instincts.

Immediately after this Mr. Marable and his son rose up to take their departure. They parted from Mr. Winter formally, at the door of the parlor; Mrs. Winter followed them out on the portico, but Hattie went with them down the avenue to the gate. She went between them, holding each one by the hand, and so, sorrowfully and silently, they went on to the gate.

Here, those who had travelled so much of life together stopped to separate.

As Paul held her hand, he said,—

“For more than ten years now you have been to me a very dear sister, always gentle and kind. It may be that we will meet each other no more in this life,—God’s will be done,—but there is to me pleasure in the thought that as you have been to me in the past, so will you continue to be to me, the same sweet sister forever.”

She looked up. “Oh, Paul!” she murmured, but could say no more. He, bending down, kissed her through her tears.

“My child,” said Mr. Marable, “you have been all to me that a daughter could be,—a joy and a light to my household. You leave a void there which no one but you can fill. Good-by. May God bless you and make you a blessing to those around you!”

She threw her arms about his neck and kissed him,—and so they parted. She watched them through her tears as they went along the shaded street until they passed from sight, and then turned to join her mother, who was coming down the avenue to meet her.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON PICKET—LETTER FROM HATTIE—CHANCELLORSVILLE.

As Paul Marable passed through Richmond he met with his well-beloved friend, Kennon Macdermot. It was a chance meeting, and a joyful surprise to both the friends. Kennon had entered service in one of the Alabama regiments as a lieutenant, and had since been promoted to the rank of captain. His regiment was in the Army of the West, but he had come to Richmond as the bearer of important despatches to the government. Having just finished his business when he met with Paul, at the latter's suggestion he applied for and obtained from the adjutant-general a permit to visit the Army of Northern Virginia, still encamped about Fredericksburg. The three days Kennon spent with his old classmates in their camp were full of pleasure to them, and passed only too swiftly. He and Paul had interchanged a few letters since the commencement of the war. After promising again to write to each other as often as circumstances would permit, they parted—not as friends, but as brothers, and as brothers who might never meet again.

On the day that Paul and his friend arrived in camp, Julian was absent on duty, having charge of a picket station on the river, about a mile away. It being late in the afternoon when they arrived, and being weary from an eight miles' tramp, the distance from the railroad station, they thought they would not go out to where Julian was that night.

After partaking of what refreshment the camp—aided by a box lately arrived from Innisfel—offered, they lay down to sleep. But Paul could not sleep; his thoughts were with his brother. Presently he got up softly, so as not to awaken his sleeping friend, and went towards the river, having first placed in a haversack some sandwiches prepared by his mother, a bottle of Catawba wine, likewise home-made, and a can of oysters he had bought in Richmond.

A quarter of a mile from the river he stumbled unexpectedly upon the quiet bivouac of his brother. Julian was sitting close to a few smouldering embers, with which he was trying to boil a cup of coffee. As Paul came suddenly upon him he sprang up.

"Halt! Who comes there?" he demanded, in a quick but low tone.

"Paul."

The next instant they had grasped each other by the hand. Then, Julian rolling up another log of wood to the fire for Paul, they sat down.

"When did you get in?" asked Julian.

"At sunset. I brought Kennon with me."

"You did! I will be glad to see him. Where did you meet with him?"

"In Richmond. I met him just after he got through with the business which carried him there. He then obtained a permit to make us a three days' visit."

"I am glad of it. But you ought to have stayed with him to-night, Paul, and have rested. I know the walk from the station tired you."

"Yes, a little, and I did lie down, but, failing to go to sleep, I concluded to look you up. Here is something I brought to go with your coffee."

"Sandwiches from home," said Julian, as he began to empty the haversack of its contents; "and here is a bottle of mother's Catawba, which is good anywhere and at any time, and lastly, a can of oysters. I could wish for nothing better than these things. You can join me, I hope?"

"Yes; we had supper in camp, yet I ate but little."

"In anticipation of this visit to me, I dare say. How did you leave them at home?"

"All well. You have received Bertha's letter, I suppose, which told of the discovery of Hattie's parents?"

"Yes; it came two days ago. For once, heavy news travelled slowly. I have thought of little else since it came. When Bertha wrote, father had written to Chaffey Phipps, and was waiting to hear from her. I was surprised to learn that old Chaffey was connected with it; yet it explains some of her conduct which I could not before understand. I am anxious now to hear what has since occurred."

Paul then told him of the reception of the package from Athens, giving a description of its contents. He then told of the farewell to Innisfel, of the journey to Augusta, and of their reception at Travis Square.

While Paul was speaking, so great was Julian's interest, the tempting viands before him were forgotten. He could see nothing then but the moon-lighted face of his brother; could hear nothing but those words detailing how Hattie had been lost to him. A short silence followed the conclusion of Paul's story, which was broken by Julian muttering fiercely,—

"Confound Horace Winter! I would never have returned her to such a father." Then, in a changed but still low tone, he continued: "It is all very strange. Do you remember our ride on the river, Paul, the day she came to us? How often have I thought of that day!"

"Yes; well do I remember it," answered Paul; "and I remember, too, some one saying, 'And what do I care for your love, Miss Hattie?'"

"But 'some one' has made amends for that speech; nor was he slow in making it. I tell you, Paul, I can't think patiently of our Hattie being taken from us in this way, especially since I know to what a heartless father she has gone."

"The mother, I could see, is gentle and affectionate; and, if I am any physiognomist, she is a good woman; so let us hope for the best. What's the news along the line?"

Julian, recalled by this question from the theme which had so absorbed him to the discussion of military affairs, was recalled likewise to his duty, as a true soldier, to no longer neglect the good cheer before him, all the way from his mother's larder.

These were quickly made to disappear; but still the brothers sat in the light of the pale moon talking, only pausing now and then to stir the smouldering embers at their feet.

The half-full moon was sinking below the hills when Paul rose up to return to camp.

In March, the two brothers received the following letter from Augusta:

"MY DEAR BROTHERS,—My father, a month ago, on the occasion of my receiving a letter from each of you, forbade

my writing to you again, in order that our correspondence might cease. This explains why your letters remained so long unanswered. If you have written since, your letters have not been allowed to reach me. After much asking I obtained permission to write you this farewell letter.

"Oh! Julie and Paul, it is needless to tell you how much grief this has caused me. But this is not all. From what has been said, I am convinced that this is the first step in breaking off my correspondence with the whole family. It is not right for me to complain, and so I'll try to think and talk of something else. Yet I must express something of the keen disappointment I feel in anticipation of the time when I shall be cut off from all communication with those I have loved so long and so well. When I left dear Innisfel, it was with the cheerful hope of having constant intercourse with its members by letter, and the still more pleasing one of sometimes returning to it in person. My dear, gentle mother sympathizes with me, and so helps me to bear my disappointment much better than I otherwise would.

"Since my last letter to you, Mr. Ned Winter has come to Augusta. He calls me cousin, but I've never yet owned the relationship, nor do I intend to. When compelled to speak to him at all, it is always as Mr. Winter. Mamma says that on former visits to Augusta he would affect to be, when in her company, quite pious, but she heard, long ago, of his showing a very different character when with others. He seems now to have thrown away that mask, for he reveals himself, on all occasions, a reckless and wicked man, and one ready at all times to scoff at everything sacred. He and father have had some business transactions in common, which have caused some uneasiness to mother; I hardly know why, as I am such a stranger to anything like business, but there seems to have been some pretty heavy losses. You know what a bold, confident manner he has; this, with his mocking at religion,—oh, how sorry I am to write it!—will make father continue to trust him, I am afraid.

"He has a friend, a Mr. Rich Houghton, whom he brought here once to tea. I remember having heard this man's name before, and that it was in connection with M. B.'s flight with Mr. W., but what part he took in that affair I never knew. I have seen him, I said, only once, but I do not like him at all;

neither does mother. Now, don't be uneasy, my generous brothers, because I am sometimes thrown into the company of such men as the two I have mentioned. I know that you would shield me from such as they are, yet I will be able, I hope, to avoid them in the future.

"I must now tell you something about my dear mamma. It is needless to tell you that she loves me, yet it would be difficult to tell how great her love is for me. She seems to be trying to make up for those long years I was lost to her. Mamma has had much sorrow and many trials to endure in her life; for a long time, almost more than she could bear. But she found help at last—found Him who, if we trust Him to do it, is willing to help us bear our burdens. Since then—long before I came—she was leading a peaceful life, and one, too, in which she often found an unlooked-for cup of happiness. She busied herself, as our dear mamma at Innisfel loves to do, in doing good to others. Don't think that she told me all this; it is what I could hardly help learning after being here so long as I have. Since my arrival, she has told me how happy she was in having me with her. I need hardly say that we are constant companions.

"Mamma formed a splendid opinion of you, dear Paul, though she saw you so short a time. 'There is such a pure and brave look in his face,' she said of you after you were gone. But I could fill my letter with the fine speeches she has made about you. But you, poor Julie, whom she had never seen, she conceived to be a very lion in depravity. For some reason of his own, Mr. N. W., when on a visit just after his dismissal from college, charged upon you all the evil-doing of which he had been guilty while at college, and plainly intimated that he had suffered in your stead. As he had mamma's confidence at that time,—though she has suspected him from that visit,—her wrong estimate of your character is not to be wondered at. Need I say that she now only thinks of you as one who was a good, kind, and generous brother to her lost daughter?

"I will not ask you, my brothers, to often think of me in the long and dreary silence that is before us, for I know that you will do it. But oh, let me assure you that whatever may happen, even though this separation be final and complete, I will cling to the memory of the years at Innisfel, will cling to

the tendrils of love that gathered about and cherished me there, and will rest in the hope that neither the hand of prejudice, nor the stronger hand of death, can always interpose between those loved ones and myself; in the hope that the chain of love forged there can never be broken. Farewell!

"Your

HATTIE."

Julian and Paul were not only grieved but indignant at the revelations of this letter. A month later they learned, through a letter from their mother, that the interdict on Hattie's correspondence with her friends at Innisfel had gone into effect. A few days after receiving this information Julian wrote a letter to Chaffey Phipps, the result of which was that the old woman moved from Athens to Augusta, and took a small house in the neighborhood of Travis Square.

Early in May active hostilities were resumed by another advance of the Federals across the Rappahannock. They were promptly met by the Confederates. For three long days did the opposing hosts struggle together for the possession of the doubtful field. Many brave acts, deeds of daring and heroism, were done by the veterans of both armies in that prolonged contest near Chancellorsville. At the close of the third day the Federal line had been everywhere repulsed; and that night it withdrew, under cover of darkness, to the north side of the river.

Wright's brigade was actively engaged on each of the three days during which the action lasted. On the second day, Lieutenant Marable was appointed, temporarily, adjutant of the brigade, that officer having been disabled by a wound at the close of the first day's fight.

On the afternoon of the third day, while General Wright's brigade was pursuing the retreating foe across an open field, a bomb exploded just above the line. Several fell. Ere the smoke cleared away, the line had advanced some distance beyond the spot. Julian Marable was one of those who fell at the explosion of the bomb.

It was night. The last cannon had been fired; no sound was now heard save the moan of the dying, or the harrowing cries of the wounded. The stars came out one by one until they thickly studded the sky. Here and there, scattered over

the field, at wide intervals, were groups of two or three, searching for their wounded friends or comrades. Here and there, too, were detachments of the ambulance corps, likewise looking after the wounded.

At length the moon arose, shedding its mild radiance over that field where lay friend and foe, the gray and the blue, often side by side; where lay the dead and the dying, and the stalwart man writhing with the agony of a broken or mutilated limb. Ah! that was a ghastly spectacle upon which the moon and stars looked down that night; a gory spectacle over which men and angels might weep; a mournful spectacle to Him who came to bring peace on earth and good-will to men.

Julian Marable was neither among the dead nor the dying, nor could it be fairly said that he was wounded. The concussion of the shell, which had exploded close to his head, stunned him, and he had fallen like one dead. A private, who was killed by a fragment of the same shell, fell across the right leg of his prostrate captain, and lay there. So great was the shock which Julian had received that not until the moon had risen, and its light had fallen upon his face, did consciousness begin to return to him. When he first realized his position, and attempted to move, he felt a pain in his right leg so severe, he concluded at once that his wound was in that limb. He made an effort to remove the body of the private from his leg, but his strength not having then returned, his effort was unsuccessful. He then turned his attention to the three men stretched on and around him. They appeared to have been killed outright. He recognized only one of them, —the only one whose face was turned up to the moon; it was Bill Camp.

Julian had just placed himself in as comfortable a position as he could, to wait quietly until some of his friends, or the ambulance corps, came to his relief, when his attention was arrested by seeing two men, about thirty yards off, apparently engaged in caring for the wounded. As he watched them, they came nearer, turning the light of what seemed a dark-lantern in every direction, as if in search of some one. Stopping presently beside a prostrate form, Julian heard one of them say, in a voice which sounded strangely familiar,—

“Ah! Jack, look at this poor fellow. The Patrocleian artery has been severed, while the ochis Achilleus has been

entirely carried away. Life is extinct, I perceive" (Julian saw him now bending very low over the body); "we can do nothing for him—*requiescat*—let us on."

Julian saw him, as he rose up, transfer from the pocket of the dead man to his own something which glittered in the moonlight. The next man they approached, though lying very still, proved to be wounded, for, on their stopping beside him, he asked feebly for water.

"Put your canteen to his mouth, Jack. Ah! poor fellow! wounded, are you? A facial wound, I observe. Hold your lantern, Jack, while I diagnose this wound. Yes, I see now; the ball entered here. Pay attention, Jack, as these practical lessons in surgery will be more useful to you than years spent over books. The ball, I say, entered the acropolis here" (touching lightly with his finger the man's cheek-bone); "it ranged then under the left visual organ, cutting loose both the isis and osiris, and seriously damaging the memnonian lyre. Hence it took its course, carrying away a part of the pons asinorum; then, ranging through the cretan labyrinth of this other luminary, made its exit near the pantheonic muscle of the right acropolis. We can do nothing for you, at present, but give you a taste of Life's Elixir, which will keep you in spirits until my ambulances arrive. Hold your spirit canteen to his lips, Jack."

Jack did so for one moment, then followed the other. As they went away, the wounded man muttered, "That's 'bout the weakest spirits ever teched my lips."

Julian, before this, had comprehended the work of these two night-birds. In the speaker he recognized his old acquaintance George Brenham; the other he did not know, but he saw that he was a low-browed, villainous-looking man, whom he rightly conjectured to be not only an accomplice of Brenham, but a fit tool in his hands for carrying out this nefarious plan for robbing the dead and wounded. Julian's first impulse was to laugh at the quaint substitutes adopted by Brenham in lieu of scientific terms; but the next instant he felt such a sense of the heartlessness and rascality of the proceeding that he, almost involuntarily, put his hand to his belt with the intent of summarily ending it. By the time his hand found the stock of his repeater, however, he changed his mind, and determined to watch the affair a while longer.

He noticed that they shunned, as well as they could, the wounded. They approached next the lifeless body of a Federal. Jack turned the body over, and proceeded silently to search its pockets, transferring to his own whatever of value they contained. Leaving this man, Jack thrust his lantern in the face of a Confederate who was lying still, with his pale face turned up to the moon, and with a ghastly, staring hole in his breast. As the light fell upon his face he opened his eyes.

"What can I do for you, my brave lad?" asked Brenham.

"Water," whispered the parched lips.

At the command of his leader, Jack gave the man water. As the canteen was withdrawn, the man feebly murmured his thanks.

"What can I do for you?" again asked Brenham. "Shall I look at your wound?"

"Yes; tell me ef I'm done for."

"Hold your lantern here, doctor, while I make a synoptic, or rather diagnostic, examination of this wound. The ball entered here, in the region of the cardia, going close to that important organ, and doing it some damage. Passing thence over the rubicon artery, it went towards the acterna roma; turning from which across the adriaticus, and going close by the parnassian muscle of the shoulder, it passed out through the pharsalian segment of the spine."

"Stop, doctor; is thar any chance for me?"

"None, I am sorry to say. Have you any message, or article of value about you, you wish sent to your folks? I will try to have them delivered."

"Thank ye. I've a silver watch in the fob below my belt. It's not worth much, but my poor wife will be glad to get it; and mebbe some day my little boy will be—proud to wear it. There's some money in my pocket-book; send it, too. My poor woman will need all she can get now. You'll find, too, a pictur of her'n—and a couple of letters, the last she writ me. They'll tell ye whar to send—send 'em with the rest."

Jack, having taken these articles from the pockets of the dying man, handed them to Brenham. The latter said, as he stowed them away in his own pockets,—

"All right, my brave man; I'll see that these things are properly forwarded."

"Thank ye, doctor. Oh! Sue, my girl——" and with his wife's name on his lips the soul of the brave soldier went out.

Brenham and his accomplice now came directly towards the spot where Julian lay. The latter kept quiet, and with his eyes fixed upon the face of the elder villain. When they had come up close to him, and the light of the lantern was turned upon his face, Brenham recognized him with a slight start, but recovering himself instantly, said,—

"Ha! an old friend. Well met, Mr. Julian Marable! Can I be of any service to you? You are surprised to see me, captain, but you behold me, at last, engaged in that work for which I am peculiarly fitted by nature——"

"Yes; thieving from the dead and wounded!" interrupted Julian, in a sneering tone.

"Ha! Hal, dost thou turn upon me so?" said Brenham, in still affable tones, but with a malicious twinkle in his eyes. "Come, no irreverent remarks, Hal. Prudence, let me suggest, becomes a man in your condition. If I should intimate to my henchman here the propriety of silencing thy ribald tongue, or, I may say, the mercy there would be in putting you out of your misery—Jack is very charitably inclined—and translating thee to a less cruel world——"

"You are a villain, Brenham,—a damned villain!" interrupted Julian, making an effort, as he spoke, to draw his pistol from its case.

At that moment Jack plucked his superior by the arm, and pointed to two men who, about a hundred yards off, were coming towards them at a quick pace. Brenham no sooner saw these men than he started off in a run, followed by his accomplice, in the direction of the nearest wood. Owing to Julian's position, some time elapsed before he succeeded in releasing the pistol from his belt; when he did do so, the men were fifty yards away. He let fly a ball after them, but its only effect was to increase their speed. He now turned his head towards those coming up on the other side, and was glad to recognize in them Paul and Tony. When they came near, and before they had recognized him, he called out to them, and, pointing to the two men, now within thirty or forty yards of the wood, said, eagerly,—

"If you can catch those men, Paul, do it before you help me."

"We can't overtake them before they reach the copse," re-

plied Paul, "and then to look for them would be useless. Besides, I should help you first. Here, Tony, help me lift this man from your mas' Julian's leg. Handle him carefully, boy. There. Now, Julian, where is your hurt? Your voice shows it not to be serious, I think."

"I do not know where it is, Paul, unless it is in my right leg. I was struck, or stunned perhaps, by the explosion of a shell, the same which killed these brave fellows here. I awoke as from a sleep, after the moon was up, feeling a severe pain in the leg on which this man was lying. I tried to move him off, but was too weak to do it, and so lay quiet, waiting for help to come."

As soon as Paul ascertained that his brother had received no wound, he turned to the three men lying near, to see if life remained in any of them.

"Poor Camp!" he said, as he bent over the lifeless body. "Here lies one of our best soldiers, Julian."

"Yes, one of the bravest in the army," replied his brother. "You made a man of him, Paul; he kept the pledge he gave to you, now nearly two years ago."

On Julian's attempting to walk, he became dizzy, and would have fallen had he not caught hold of Paul, who was walking beside him. This was the effect of the severe shock he had received. His brother would then have led him to the rear, but Julian insisted on rejoining his regiment at once. So, supported on either side by his brother and Tony, he reached, about eleven o'clock, his tired comrades, sleeping on their arms, and in line of battle. On the way, he detailed to Paul the villainy he had just seen perpetrated by George Brenham and his miserable tool.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

AFTER the battle of Chancellorsville, Captain Marable was promoted to the rank of major, which promotion advanced Paul to the captaincy. The latter, for his gallant conduct, both at Antietam and at Malvern Hill, had received honorable mention in the report of the general commanding the division, made immediately subsequent to those engagements. In consequence of these reports, the name of Paul Marable was well known and esteemed in the Army of Northern Virginia.

General Lee gave his men a few weeks' rest after the battle of Chancellorsville, during which he made his preparations for a second invasion of the North. The battle-cloud had lowered long over his loved Virginia; he would make one more determined effort to lift it beyond her limits.

During these days of rest and preparation Paul was threatened with sickness. Julian urged him to apply for a furlough.

"No; not now," he replied. "I know that the long and fatiguing march, exposure to the noonday sun, and the chilling dews of night, are before us; I know that the toils of the battle-field must be endured, and its dangers faced, and that to endure these toils and exposures requires all our strength. But if there ever was a time when our country needed the service of her sons it is *now*; and go I must, to share the hardships and perils of my comrades, so long as God gives me strength to go."

"But if you could rest for a couple of weeks now," argued Julian, "the chances are you would return, at the end of that time, with your strength so recruited that the service would gain rather than lose by your absence."

"No; the example would be bad," answered Paul. "By close attention to my diet, I hope to recruit my strength here. Our gallant commander is preparing for a bold campaign, in

which every man must do his duty. I am fighting, not for fame, nor to perpetuate slavery, but for the very same principles for which our forefathers fought in '76,—for the right of sovereign States to govern themselves. When I look at the advantages which accrue from being a member of a great commonwealth,—a commonwealth with a glorious past, and such as was the United States,—I deplore secession. And when I look at the magnitude of this war, at the immense loss of life it has caused, and must still cause, I deplore secession. Yet, once in, we must fight it out to the bitter end. To surrender now would be to prove false to ourselves and traitors to principle. And yet we may fail. The war may grow in volume; I may go down beneath its red wave, and you and these brave fellows around us. The exhausted Confederacy may not be able to meet the new (ever-being-raised) levies of the North, and may lie, at last, defenceless before its countless hordes. But the cause for which we are fighting will still live; it *must* live, for when it dies republicanism dies with it. But, Julian, I have never permitted myself, in talking with any one, to anticipate defeat. Of course, I talk with you more freely than I do with others; yet think not that I anticipate failure,—the fact is, we can't afford to be otherwise than hopeful."

Lieutenant Duke, having been wounded at Chancellorsville, immediately after the battle went home on furlough. He returned to the army the day before it left its old position around Fredericksburg, to begin its second invasion of the North. It was night when he arrived, and he found Julian and Paul alone in their tent. After their mutual greetings and inquiries after friends were over, Duke opened a box he had brought with him, and taking out a handsome cake set it before his two friends.

"Mrs. Will Duke, formerly Miss Rabie Briggs," he said, "commissioned me to present this to her two friends, Major and Captain Marable, with her compliments."

Then followed expressions of surprise, coupled with hearty congratulations, from the two young men,—and these despite the grim war-cloud that lowered over them all.

The young men had much to talk about that night; and though they knew that they would need all their strength for the next day's march, it was close to the midnight hour when they lay down to sleep.

A few weeks have passed. The Confederate army has again crossed the Potomac, and is passing through Northern Maryland towards the confines of Pennsylvania. The Federal forces, concentrated at Frederick, and placed under the command of General Meade, push on after the Confederates.

On the first day of July, near Gettysburg, the two armies met, when there ensued a sharp conflict between the advance divisions on either side. At the close of the day the Federals retired to a strong position on Cemetery Hill, to await the arrival of the main army, momentarily expected.

The forenoon of the next day was consumed by both armies in making their final preparations for the deadly conflict close at hand, and upon the issue of which so much depended. Early in the afternoon the battle was resumed by the advance of the Confederates. For five long hours, beneath the heat of a July sun, was it fought, fiercely and stubbornly. Charge after charge was made, shock after shock was met and repelled. The day closed at length, but not the battle: it was still undecided, and must be resumed on the morrow. Oh, that morrow!

During the night the Federal army had been reinforced by fresh troops; there were none that might come to help and cheer the tried and thinned ranks of the Confederacy. The same worn battalions that had stood up for two days before an outnumbering enemy must again on the morrow attack, in addition to that enemy, the hosts which that night arrived. Oh, that morrow!

It came at length, ushered in by a crimson dawn. Ah, how many there were who saw again, in the red streaks and flecks of that dawn, the same red streaks and spots which, ever and anon, whether awake or asleep, they had seen floating before their eyes during the past few weeks,—the presages of that fate which was to meet them on this day!

The position occupied by the Federals was an exceedingly strong one. Upon Cemetery Hill they had more than a hundred field-pieces massed, which were supported by a large force of infantry. On either hand of this strongly-defended position, along a range of hills, the Federal line extended.

At an early hour, on the third of July, began the third and last struggle for the possession of that field which may be called the Waterloo of the war between the States. With the

impetuous valor of Napoleon's veterans did the Southern troops advance to the conflict, and with the stubborn courage of Wellington's sturdy English did the battalions of the North receive the fiery onset. Here Greek met Greek: the ardent Diomedes of the South encountered here not the tame Phrygians of the East, but the stout Ajaces of their own warlike race.

Higher and higher the sun climbs the firmament, and still the work of death goes on; he reaches the zenith, and still that battle-storm, more fierce than the deadly samiel of the desert, sweeps the fatal field of Gettysburg. For one, two, three hours, the king of day descends the western sky, and yet the battle rages. Division after division has been hurled, with seemingly resistless force, against the Federal line, but it stands unshaken. The division in which was the Marable Guards has not yet been brought into the action. It, with two others, has been held in reserve. This reserve force is now brought forward: one more desperate attempt will be made to break yon stubborn line, and if that fails, all is lost. The reserve divisions are brought to the front: the men need not to be shown the object of attack; their anxious eyes have been turned towards it all day; they need no words of exhortation from their officers; they know their duty, and the grim fixedness about their faces reveals something of the unflinching energy with which they will discharge it.

On these veteran legions move, with the steady and measured tramp of the evening parade. Out from the woods that had sheltered them and on to the tempest-swept field they pass. On, steadily on; on by their dead and their wounded, and on through a whirlwind of ball, of grape, and of canister, they rush. And now they gain the foot of the hill whose summit, lined with a hundred cannon, they started out to reach. The stern cry of "Forward!" still rings along the line, and the forlorn hope of the Confederacy ascends the fatal hill. With bayonets fixed, and a fierce cry of defiance, they mount the hill and plunge through the sulphurous canopy that encircles its crest. In another moment they have reached the hostile cannon, and are bayoneting the gunners who failed to flee in time before the impetuous charge.

The Confederates raised a yell of triumph as they seized the abandoned guns, and prepared to turn them upon the

enemy they deemed retreating. But ere the echoes of their shout had died away, there came a roar of cannon and musketry, so deafening and continuous that the earth trembled beneath the appalling sound. It came from a hill in the rear of and commanding the one just taken by the Confederates. The latter saw this hill now for the first time; saw it lined with bristling cannon, and knew that these were supported by the chief part of the Federal army. They looked behind to see if they were supported: the skeleton regiments that had fought through the day had started to their support, but were not yet in sight: they looked upon either hand and saw that they were being flanked, and would soon be cut off and surrounded. To assail the enemy in front was utter madness, and to remain where they were could result only in their capture or destruction.

Consternation now sat upon those faces where, a moment before, was the gleam of triumph. The brave men who had dared so much and gained so little now hesitated, wavered, and then began to fall back in disorder. Some of the officers, among the rest the two Marables, made strenuous efforts to prevent a rout. Paul had lost his hat in the charge, and his golden head now flashed among his men as he encouraged them to retire slowly, and with their faces to the foe. Lieutenant Duke bravely seconded his captain in this effort. Half-way down the hill, and the yellow hair flashed no more along the retreating line. Julian and Duke saw Paul when he fell, and both ran to him. He besought them both to leave him, and to make their escape. No, they would not leave him. Picking him up between them, they hurried on after their retreating friends. As they reached the foot of the hill Julian staggered and fell. Duke hesitated.

"Fly, Will!" urged Paul. "For your country's sake, make your escape!"

Duke then spoke a hurried good-by to both, and the next instant was rapidly following after his companions.

The Federals did not pursue their discomfited foe farther than the crest of the hill, yet continued a destructive fire upon them, both with cannon and small arms, as long as they were within sight. In fifteen minutes more this decisive battle was ended, the fierce storm was hushed, the deadly kamsin had passed by,—but not passed the pain and intolerable woe that

filled its desolate track. The battle-storm had passed, but not the anguish which it brought; this would linger for weeks and months, and long years,—aye, a generation must pass ere all the wounds it had brought could be healed.

During those fifteen minutes the two brothers lay quietly apart, yet near enough to hold each other by the hand. They lay silently, too, for both were too exhausted to make themselves heard above the noise of the battle; besides, each shrank from asking the other of his wound. When all firing had at length ceased, Julian dragged himself close to his brother.

"Paul," he said, "I am not hurt much; can I do anything for you?"

"I thank God, Julian, that you are not hurt much! It would have been more—I mean for both of us to have been taken—than the dear ones at Innisfel could bear. God help them!"

The words of Paul smote the soul of his brother with anguish that could find no expression in words. There seemed to fall upon his heart a cold, leaden weight, and on his soul a shadow, dark and ominous. As he made no answer, Paul spoke again.

"Where is your wound, Julian?"

"In my left thigh. The bone is broken, but I feel no pain." Then raising himself on his elbow, he continued, "Paul, your head is a little down the hill; let me get you into a more comfortable position."

By much effort he managed to so turn his brother that his head was now not only up the hill, but resting against his own right thigh. He, himself, was sitting nearly erect, with his back resting against a stump, which happened to be near to the spot where he fell.

"I'm easier now, Julian; but I fear you have hurt yourself in making me so. Does your wound bleed much?"

"I believe so; yet what matters it? We have lived together so long, why not die together now? We have lived to see the last great effort which our country can make for her deliverance a disastrous failure, so what more fitting time than now to die?"

"Oh, Julian, my brother, talk not so!" urged Paul. "Look to your wound at once. Make a compress with your handkerchief just above it." Seeing that Julian still hesitated, he

went on, in a tone at once pleading and remonstrating, "You sin, not only against yourself and your country, but against the loved ones at home, and against me, Julian, if you neglect that wound any longer. You will not so sadden my last hours, I know?"

This last appeal was effectual. Julian examined his wound for the first time, and made the compress, using his knife and pocket-handkerchief as well as he could. The effort, and the pain which accompanied it, wellnigh exhausted him. Neither spoke for some time afterwards; their eyes were turned towards the west, where the sun had just gone down behind a billowy cloud that rested upon the horizon. Their thoughts were with those far away beyond the hills where rested the golden cloud, whose loving hearts were to break over that day's sad work. Thus looking towards the west, with their right hands clasped, they lay motionless and silent. But the thoughts of the elder brother soon returned to that loved form by his side, who, it was too plain, had received his death-wound. The silence was at length broken by Paul, who, turning his head slightly, so that he could see the face of his brother, said calmly, with something of his old cheerfulness, and all of the old music in his tone,—

"My brother, I have fought my last battle."

A convulsive shudder passed through Julian's frame. By a powerful effort he checked the wild burst of grief that rose in his heart, and said, though in words that trembled,—

"And you made a good fight, Paul, as you have always done. But in the great battle of life you have won, have gallantly won. Had I been killed, I would have been swallowed up in death, because, in this battle, I have shrank back."

"But, Julian, you will not shrink back. Have I not watched you these many years? Do I not know my own brother? Yes; I know him too well to believe that he will always mistake the dross for the gold,—that he will always cling to the earth when he may attain to the skies."

It was affecting to see the confidence which he still had in his brother.

"Ah, Paul," replied Julian, "it is your brother's partial heart that makes you talk so. Would that I were worthier of your confidence! Our lives have been very different, very. Mine has grown familiar with vice."

"But you love not those vices, Julian. I tell you, my brother, that you are no sensualist. It is impossible that you can afford to be one; impossible that you will always be content to grasp only leaves where golden fruit hangs within your reach; impossible that you can be content to drink only dregs, when a fountain of clear and healthful water is springing close beside you. Impossible!"

"I have grasped at the leaves and drank the dregs a long time, Paul."

"Yes; but did these satisfy you?"

"No! Oh, no!"

After a short pause, Paul continued,—

"I once had a dream, Julian, in which I saw two—you and me—travelling a highway together."

"Yes, Paul; I have seen that vision twice, and each time we parted company. Yet in one of them—the first—I saw, ere it ended, that we were together again."

"The very same that I have seen. Yes, yes, we will go on together,—Julian and I together. Were we not suckled by the same breast? did we not say our childish prayers together at the same knee? have not our names been daily borne to heaven on the same prayers? Julian and I—we will go together."

He ceased speaking from exhaustion. Julian did not reply; he dared not trust himself to speak. During the silence which followed, the moon arose from behind the eastern hills, shedding a peaceful light on the ghastly field below. Paul was the first to break the silence.

"Cheer up, Julian," he said; "it is all well with me. It is true that my prospect for this life was fair, very fair; but while this is being taken away a fairer one, yes, much fairer, is opening before me. There remains to me now but a very short time. I would send a few messages home."

Pausing here, Julian asked,—

"Do you feel pain? Can I make you more comfortable in any way?"

"I feel little pain. But if you can raise my head a little higher, I think I will rest some easier."

Julian drew his head higher up toward his own breast.

"There, that will do," said Paul. "I will rest easier now. But I fear your discomfort has been added to."

Julian assuring him that he was resting just as well as he was before, Paul continued,—

"Tell our dear old father, Julian, that his son was not afraid to die; that in teaching him how to live, he taught him how to die. Tell him that he was faithful in all his duty to me. Tell our mother, our gentle mother, that her love has been very dear to me. Tell her, Julian, that sometimes, of late, when looking on this great war, looking on its harvest of ruin and death, I have grown weary, oh, so weary! and, at such times, I would think of her, and wish for her, that I might, as in childhood's days, lay my head upon her lap, and, with her gentle touch upon my brow, be soothed to sleep and rest." Here he paused as if to recover strength to go on. When he resumed, his voice was low, yet soft and full of melody, as of old. "Tell Bertha, our sweet sister, that she was ever a source of joy and gladness to me; that thinking on the many walks and rides we have taken together about dear old Innisfel has cheered many a dull hour in camp. Tell her that she was to me all that a sister could be to a brother. Tell our Hattie—for she is still ours, Julian, and nothing can separate her from us—that Paul thought of her at the last, and longed to look once more into her dear, bright eyes. Tell her that as she was ours in the past, she is ours still, and will be ours forever. God shield our Hattie!" He again ceased speaking, as if to rest, though he had spoken with calmness, and apparently little difficulty. After a few minutes he thus went on: "There's Tony, poor fellow, always faithful and affectionate he has been; tell him that I said he was so, and let the other servants at home know that I remembered them all. There are many others—I have not strength to name them all—whose friendships have been very dear to me. Chief among these is my old rival Kennon,—my brave, generous Kennon. There is one other, Julian. She walked beside me in the pathway of life but a few months, yet the grace and brightness of her beauty never left me. Would that I could have seen her once more, if only for a moment, to feel again the soft touch of her hand on mine, to look again into the depths of her dark eyes and have hers look into mine, as in the happy evenings at Baden! but it may not be. Good-by, Flora, and may Christ still lead thee!"

He ceased. The pause continued longer than any hereto-

fore. Julian, thinking the change had come, tightened his arms about his brother, and drew him closer to his breast. As he did so Paul again spoke, but in a manner so incoherent that Julian perceived at once that he had fallen into an unconscious state. With his gaze still turned toward the west, and with his arms clasped about his brother, he reclined motionless, listening to the loved voice. Paul's sentences were much broken,—frequent pauses occurring between them,—while some of them were inarticulate.

“——Don't trouble the poor boy any more, boys; it's cowardly. That's right, Julian—we will defend him. . . . See, Julian, how it burns! it will soon be around the pilot-house. Quick, father! Julian, let us save the brave man. Too late! There comes—poor Matt! . . . It is late—two o'clock—and Julian not returned yet. He went off to-night, with Winter, to the billiard-saloon, which is closed before this. Who says he is drinking and gaming? It is false—he'll be in presently. . . . Hurrah, Julian! at old Innisfel once more. Yonder they come to meet us, white and black. Bring out the horses, Tony; I must have a canter with your young miss'es this evening. . . . Here we go!—beat again, John,—don't let him see you laughing at him, Bertha. . . . We will save her yet, Will; come on—how slow the train moves! We are coming, Mennie, coming to save you. This way, Will. Stand back, Ned Winter, she is mine!—mine, I tell you, Rich Houghton! I came for her,—Duke and I,—came to save her from you two villains, and we mean to do it. Cheer up, Mennie; you are with friends now. Thank God, we came in time!” Now occurred a longer pause than usual; full twenty minutes passed before the dying dreamer resumed his faint and broken utterances.

“He is sick, Miss Flora, and friendless. He is nothing to you, you say? Perhaps he is. Ah, you will go with me then to see him? I knew you would; his story brought tears into your eyes. Poor, motherless Ben! God help all such! . . . Watch her, Miss Flora. Julian, see the strange light in those eyes,—heaven help her if she loses! Come, let us follow and save her, quick! Too late, too late! You tremble, Miss Flora, to look upon the pallid face. But you will never bet again.”

Here followed another long pause, succeeded by utterances

too indistinct for Julian to catch their meaning. A little later, and the sentences becoming shorter, and on that account more distinctly uttered, Julian perceived that his brother was again fighting the battles he had already fought so gallantly. Again, as he called upon his brave Guards to follow him, he was leading the desperate charge; and then, as he called upon them to fall back slowly, and with their faces to the foe, he was again conducting the still more perilous retreat. And now, again at Chancellorsville, the bearer of orders, he is spurring his horse back and forth the disputed field, regardless of the deadly missiles sweeping it in every direction, and at its close he is standing among his brave Guards, and again is asking, "Where is Julian, my men? Where did you leave my brave brother? You know not where he fell? Then I must find him. Come, Tony, we must find him. Patience! Julian, my brother, I'm coming. God bless my brother!"

With that prayer the musical voice ceased. They were the last words of the noble and chivalric Paul. The heart suddenly ceased its throbbing beneath the encircling arm of his brother, and the golden head rested more heavily on the faithful breast that supported it.

"Oh, Paul, Paul, Paul!" came in a low wail from the stricken brother. A heavy cloud floated athwart the moon, casting its shadow on the groaning field; an ebon cloud fell upon the stunned soul of the wounded Julian, and consciousness went out before its shadow.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WANDERER IN DREAM-LAND.

OVER the gory field of Gettysburg that night, with his body bent low, as if in quest of some one, wandered the negro Tony. Now and then he would stop, and in a low and plaintive voice call out, "Mars' Julian! Mars' Paul!" The moon mounted to the zenith, and still the faithful Tony continued to search for his young masters. Once, twice, he passed not very far from the spot where they lay, but their ears could not then hear his low and trembling calls. When, at length, he came upon them, the moon was nearing the western horizon, while the gray dawn could be seen in the east. Supposing them both to be dead,—looking at their pale faces and motionless forms, and because they returned no answer when he spoke to them,—he threw himself at their feet, and there lay moaning bitterly.

In the morning twilight there came upon the field another, a young and beautiful woman. She was one who had learned to care for others; and, since the commencement of the war, had devoted herself to the noble work of alleviating, as far as her individual exertions and her money could do, the pain and sorrow which it brought. Many soldiers of both sections there now were who would bless her name as they looked back to the time when she crossed their pathway, bringing to them comfort and light and hope.

The young lady at length went towards the spot where the two brothers, and Tony at their feet, were lying. The yellow hair of Paul, as it floated against the shoulder of his brother, attracted her attention while yet some distance off. With a pale face, and trembling steps, she drew near. And now she has stopped, and looked into the upturned face of the unconscious Paul. How many fond dreams vanished with that look!

Ah, Flora, Flora! too late, too late! Not now can he feel

the soft touch of your hand, nor look into the depths of your dark eyes, as in the happy days at Baden.

She covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out the spectacle, and, with a groan, dropped upon her knees beside the two brothers. She remained in this position until the arrival of a surgeon, with a detachment of the ambulance corps, roused her to action. She would not yield to the blow which had wellnigh stunned her. By a great effort she recalled her wandering faculties, repressed, for the time, the grief in her heart, and summoned all her strength and courage for the performance of her mournful duties.

She looked now for the first time at the face of him in whose arms Paul lay. She shuddered as she recognized the brother. Oh, what anguish, she thought, had been there before her, and what anguish there was yet to be in the distant home in Georgia! Sympathy—the deep and genuine sympathy which arose in her heart for those distant loved ones, whose hearts were to be wrung by the sad work before her—served to mitigate the poignancy of her grief, and to strengthen her to do with calmness the work that she must do.

Again kneeling down, she took Paul's hand in hers; it was cold and heavy. She laid her hand upon his brow; it, too, was cold and damp: it lingered there to brush back a few straggling locks of gold. Her fingers then rested upon the wrist of Julian. She was surprised to find that he was still alive. By this time the surgeon, who knew her well, was by her side, ready to render her whatever assistance she might require.

Two weeks have passed; Julian Marable lies in a hospital in Gettysburg. It was noon; the forenoon had been very sultry, and the brazen aspect of the sky without gave no promise of a change of temperature before night. A young lady, dressed in black, with a pale face, yet beautiful in its calmness, sat beside the cot of the wounded Confederate, while a negro boy lay on the floor, at its foot, asleep. Julian had the fever; had had it for a week, and every day it had grown in violence. Oblivious of all around him, he lived in a fantastic realm, wherein much of the past was reproduced. In his delirium he never became frantic, nor tried to leave his couch, but would talk much, and often until he became exhausted.

At times he was again a boy, wandering with Paul in the

woods about Innisfel, or with him in their bateau on the river. Sometimes in these rambles he would speak to Bertha, and sometimes to Hattie. Then he would be at home,—in that loved home-circle now so sadly broken.

"Mother," he murmured, "I'm so tired this evening; Paul and I have been walking all day. Won't you sing some for us—for Paul and me? He's very tired too, mother, or he wouldn't rest his head on your lap so long. Perhaps he is hurt; you know he would hardly mention it if he were. But sing to us, mother."

He would then rest quietly for a time, doubtless dreaming on. When he spoke again he was once more a school-boy at the red-brick school-house on the hill in Rome. "Ned is a false-hearted boy, Paul; he is clever, but he is false. Why should he speak of Mennie as he did? Yes, we *will* be their brothers. Ned will deceive you, Mennie; I know him better than you can. There is Rich Houghton, too, with his black face turned towards you. See his evil eyes, how they glare upon you! But Paul is coming; do you not hear him?" His words now became indistinct, and finally ceased. During the next half-hour he lay quite silent and still, yet dreaming, as was evident from the workings of his face and an occasional start, accompanied by a half-uttered ejaculation. When he commenced again, he was with Paul on the field of Chancellorsville, after the battle. "Yes, that is Camp. I don't know the other two; they're on their faces. Stop! look at that man there with the hole in his breast. There's a woman somewhere in Georgia, named Sue,—his girl, he called her,—and a little boy, who will look, day after day, for hear from him; but they will never hear—Brenham has robbed him, and them."

There was silence once more. The watcher rose up to arrange again the wet cloth on the fevered brow of the sick man. When this was done, but ere she had resumed her seat, she heard steps in the corridor, just outside of the room. Turning her head, she saw, standing in the open entrance of the apartment, the surgeon of the ward and a gentleman dressed in black, with gray hair and beard. This stranger she had never seen before, yet she recognized him at once as the father of her wounded friend. The surgeon went through the unnecessary form of an introduction, after which Flora led the father to the side of his unconscious son.

As Philip Marable bent over the couch, his face was very pale, and there was a stern rigor about it which showed something of this terrible struggle he had made, and was still making, to go not down beneath the deep waters that had suddenly rolled in upon him. But, though the lines in his face and its forced calmness might make it appear harsh to a stranger, yet his great heart was convulsed with anguish as he bent over his stricken son.

"Julian, my boy, do you know me?" he asked, in a tone that slightly trembled, and at the same time taking one of the young man's fevered hands in both of his.

The eyes of Julian opened and rested on the face of his father, but no gleam of recognition lighted them up. This the father was hardly prepared for; this was indeed hard for him to bear. He dropped his head upon the side of the cot, and kept it there a few minutes, as if in prayer. When he arose there was a calm and settled look upon his face, a look of strength, which showed that he had not bowed his head in vain.

Tony, now awaking from his sleep, with a suppressed cry of joy recognized his master.

As Mr. Marable took the hand of his servant, he said, "This is what I expected of you, Tony,—to be with your Mas' Julian when I found him. It proves you the faithful fellow I believed you to be."

Tony was so affected by the sudden appearance of his master, and by his kind words of praise, that he could not restrain himself from tears. When he could speak, he said,—

"Oh! Mas' Philip, we're all right now. Mas' Julian 'll get well *now*. I knows he will. My! how I do long to be goin' back with him, sound and well, to the old place!"

The surgeon had informed Mr. Marable, during the brief conversation they had had together, of the principal facts in connection with Julian's illness, and also expressed to him his opinion of his condition at that time. He spoke briefly yet in high terms of Miss Blanchard's voluntary services in the hospital, and of her particular attentions to his son. Nor did he fail to mention the efficient service of the faithful Tony. In this way Mr. Marable had been prepared to meet at the couch of his son that young lady whose name the letters of his sons, written from Europe, had once rendered familiar, and the

servant of whom he had heard nothing since the battle of Gettysburg, yet whom he expected to find whenever he found his young master.

As soon as the news reached Innisfel that Major and Captain Marable were wounded—desperately wounded, the despatch read—and left on the field, Mr. Marable left home to go to them. He first made his way to the Third Georgia Regiment. From the information he received from Lieutenant Duke, he was led to fear the worst in regard to Paul; for the ghastly wound in his breast had not escaped the eye of his friend, sorely pressed as he was, when he bade him good-by. Of Julian's wound Duke could tell him nothing. Mr. Marable then sent an application to the Federal commander, asking permission to pass through his lines for the purpose of looking up two sons left upon the battle-field of Gettysburg, dangerously wounded. After a delay of several days, his application was granted, when he went directly to Gettysburg, where he found Julian, as has been stated.

Flora told to Mr. Marable how she had found the brothers on the morning after the battle, and what had since occurred. Julian had been removed from the field at once, and his wants attended to. It was not until several hours had passed after his removal to the hospital that consciousness returned to him. She was present at the time, as was also the surgeon. He recognized her, and very soon attempted to tell her something of Paul's last moments; but being very weak, the doctor put an interdict on his further speaking that day. For several days afterwards, until the fever came on, he attempted to renew the subject, but had turned from it each time with an expression of great pain on his face, and murmuring "not now." In the mean time, Paul had been placed in a metallic case, and buried in a spot selected by herself; which spot she had ordered to be enclosed with iron railings.

While Flora was giving these details, Julian, who had lain quiet longer than usual, began again to speak, and in tones so natural that the father's first thought was that the delirium had passed. The words of Julian, however, quickly undeceived him. His tone was excited, and he moved his arms in a pushing, struggling manner, as if their movement was resisted.

"I'm coming, Hattie," he cried out; "be brave, I'm coming!

Oh, how these clothes weight me down! And how stagnant the water is! Will I never reach her? Another flash—she is almost on the rocks, and yet she's gaining on me. These dead, heavy waves are pulling me back; my limbs are cramping! Oh, God, save my darling! . . . Ha, ha! saved, saved, Bertha! I saw them on the very edge of the shoals. 'Twas Stockley—he tried to disguise his voice, but I knew it."

He here became inarticulate, but an occasional word understood showed the listening father that he was still at Innisfel, conversing now with some member of the family, and now with one of those who were his guests on that, to him, memorable evening when Hattie came so near being lost in the rapids of the Oostanaula. These utterances became gradually feebler, until they ceased almost entirely.

The gray-haired man and the young maiden, though the acquaintances of an hour, felt as those who have known each other for years. Mr. Marable would have felt an interest in her simply because she was the friend of his sons. Their praise of her beauty and mental endowments, however, would have excited in him only a passing interest; but when he learned what had been her disposition when they first met her, and how that disposition was changed, by what events, and by whose influence,—these things were learned from Julian,—and when he heard the suspicion of Julian, whispered into his mother's ear, that if Paul loved any one it was Flora Blanchard, his own interest in her was naturally awakened. But now, when both his sons had been stricken down, and none were near to help, as he thought, he came and found that she had wept as a sister over the bier of one, and with a sister's devotion was watching by the bedside of the other, he felt at once that she was indeed no stranger.

After several hours had passed, the bells in the city began to chime. The sound at once arrested the attention of the dreamer.

"Do you hear those bells, Paul?" he said. "Do you hear them, Bertha? How sweetly they chime! Listen, mother, how merrily they laugh,—

"Through the balmy air of night,
How they ring out their delight!"

like Poe's golden bells. Ah me, those bells! I've heard

them before, mother. Where? Here, everywhere, and for years. Hark! they are drawing nearer, those sweet chimes; I could listen to them forever; they seem close at hand. Mother, where are they? But here comes old Chaffey; she will tell me. Behind her comes Hattie; she is singing. Listen, mother! How soothingly the notes fall upon my soul! I see naught else, I hear naught else, but this sweet singer."

When he ceased speaking, Flora said,—

"I remember hearing your sons speak often of their youngest sister, Hattie."

"Yes," replied Mr. Marable; "they could not have loved her more had she been in truth their sister."

"She was not their sister?" said Flora, looking up in surprise. "They did not tell me this; and I'm quite sure that, when talking of them to me, they made no distinction between them."

"It was natural that they should not," replied Mr. Marable. "Hattie came to us when but four years of age, and remained with us for more than ten years. Even when a small child she possessed rare personal attractions, and was adopted at once into our hearts as a daughter and sister. But she, too, about six months ago, was lost to us."

"Lost to you?" repeated Flora, with an inquiring look.

"Yes; by the discovery of her parents."

Mr. Marable then gave to the interested Flora a detailed account, so far as he knew it, of Hattie's abduction and the circumstances of her restoration. The recital of this story was interrupted only by the occasional ministrations of Flora to the sick man, in which the father assisted. When Mr. Marable ceased, Flora, after a short silence, asked,—

"Who is Chaffey Phipps? I think I heard Mr. Julian once speak of her."

"She is an eccentric old woman who lives at Athens, in Georgia. When she went there, or where she came from, I do not know,—though I have heard that she came originally from England. She conceals her age, which must be very great, and affects peculiarities in attire and demeanor, because, I suppose, she has found some profit in it. I regard her as a woman of great natural shrewdness."

"And she tells fortunes?"

"Yes; for the amusement of the young people, and her own profit, she pretends to the seer's gift."

"She is the same, then, of whom Mr. Julian once spoke to me. He told to me at the time his fortune, as it was told to him by this old woman. He was with a young lady from Augusta at the time, and it was told at her request. I remember now its drift, and some of its expressions. Some words spoken by your son just now recalled it to me."

Mr. Marable never having heard the Sibylline verses alluded to, did not understand Flora's last remark. Before she could say more, however, the dreamer began again those strange utterances, which, though painful at times, possessed a fascination not to be resisted. It was impossible not to listen to them.

"Where are you going, Paul? To the Église Évangélique?—Where do I go? For a walk in the Mabile; *au revoir!* So he goes; so I go—to the church, to the dancing-garden—but we will meet again.—You are alone in the world, are you, Lotta? I thought so—all alone in the world—and so young. Did they ever teach you to pray, Lotta? Was I? Oh, yes, yes. Do I pray now? No; but there are those who pray for me—are praying now for me. None to care or pray for you? Never mind; what matters it? How do we know that any prayers are heard? Let us not think of these things; if God had wanted us to understand them, He would have written them plainer. . . . A letter from mother and one from Hattie; I cannot read them now; yet Hattie's is short; I'll glance at it.—Ha! you've followed me? And yet I see no one. Was it a fancy? Surely the face of the Mabile girl came between me and the page. I'm alone now; alone, and with a burden; it is the same that old Chaffey told me of. Can I bear it? . . . But you made a gallant fight, Paul, a gallant fight; and you have won. Do not leave me, Paul; my fight is not yet ended, and the odds are against me. You say that I, too, I who have shrank back so long, can win? . . . Yes, yes, we have been together always—shall we be separated now?—There he goes; here I go. To the church, to the dancing-garden. There is light about his way; mine is growing dark. Ha! he looks back, he beckons to me, he calls to me; see, there is a smile on his face as he looks back, points forward with his hand, and calls to me again. Go with you,

Paul? Ay, ay, I'm coming; God helping me, we *will* go together!"

Again the voice of the dreamer became silent.

A week passed by, and then came the change looked for with so much anxiety by the watching father and friend. The fierce fever-fires which had kept Julian a wanderer so long in dream-land burnt out at length, leaving him wofully wasted, yet with the light of reason once more shining from his gray eyes. For several days still, however, he continued on the verge of the grave, during which time there was an interdict on his speaking. Julian, having little hope of recovering, and being anxious that the last words of Paul should be delivered, bore the interdict with some impatience. Slowly, imperceptibly, strength came to his wounded and fever-wasted frame. At length, one morning, when all danger seemed to be well passed, the prohibition of silence was removed.

The father and friend drew near to the couch to hear the details of Paul's death and to receive his last words. They sat there, with bowed heads, listening to the sad recital, a recital which was often interrupted by the pauses Julian made, that he might calm or force back the tide of sorrow which was constantly swelling up and threatening to drown his voice.

And when the words of the narrator ceased, the man and the maiden still sat there with bowed heads, listening—listening to the messages of love that were still and still echoing within their souls.

There was a long silence, which was broken by Julian:

"You say that I talked much during my delirium; of what?"

"Of past incidents in your life," answered his father.

"I suppose they were hardly of sufficient interest to demand your very close attention?" asked Julian, with a languid smile, and looking towards Flora.

"They would have been full of interest, Mr. Julian, had they been intended for our ears," replied the young lady.

"Ah!" said Julian, a thoughtful expression coming into his face. "I understand you; you have been forced to look upon some of the dark things of a wicked man's life."

"You have revealed no secrets," she answered. "Your utterances were too often incoherent and disconnected for any one to form, at all times, a correct conception of your dreams.

But it seemed to me there was light as well as shadow in them."

"Ah, Miss Flora, there was light, doubtless, but it was not in me; there has been light shining round about me all my life, and all the time my soul has been resting in the shadow. Will it be lifted out of it ever—ever?"

There was silence for a few minutes. The father was silent, yet wishing to speak, anxious to say something which might lead his son from out the shadow, if he were indeed still within it, into that light which streamed about his own pathway. He believed this a fitting moment, but he had learned to distrust himself when speaking to Julian on this subject. All that he had said to him in the past had had, apparently, no other effect than to harden him, or to confirm him in his hostility to the gospel. He longed to speak, yet he only bowed his head on his hand and silently prayed.

The silence was again broken by Julian:

"I would always turn from the thought of death and the grave," he said, "with a kind of dread. I would not permit myself to think of them. It is not so now. What can Death do to me more than he has done? He and I have been brought close together; he has stared me in the face and lain close by my side. Paul knows what it is to die, to lie in the silent tomb; why should I fear it? He and I were inseparable; can death separate us? The grave was a place that I glanced at sometimes with dread, and always as from a far distance. Now it has been brought close to me, and I look upon it with familiar eyes, and into it, and seeing Paul there, I think it not such a gloomy place after all; and sometimes I think that—that it would be quite natural for me to be there by his side. And yet I would live."

"For what?"

Julian started at these two words spoken by his father.

"For what?" He repeated the question as if to himself. "For what? Oh, father, not to go back to the old life—never, never!"

"I thank God for that, Julian!" said Mr. Marable, in tones that slightly trembled. He then added: "Trust yourself to the Spirit of God, my son; He will guide you into all truth."

"Ah, that 'truth,' and 'trust yourself to the Spirit of God'! Shall I find the one only by doing the other? I don't under-

stand this; but I can *see* the truth in a holy life,—can see in it both truth and beauty.”

“But, Julian,” replied his father, “if you can see truth and beauty in these imperfect lives, how much more clearly must you see them in that life which alone was perfect,—the life of the Son of God. Let us then seek the truth as it is found in Him.”

Yes, Julian was beginning to see Him as the source of all beauty and truth, was beginning to recognize that power in his life which seemed to be enduring as the world and resistless as the might of God. Surely the Galilean will conquer the world. But then, he asked himself, what is this *faith* of which the Christian speaks? Could he receive it, receive it with all its mystical dogmas and paradoxical creeds? And then he shrank from the thought as if with weariness. That old Pyrrhonic spirit, would it never leave him?

A few days after the conversation just narrated, Mr. Marable, in company with Flora, paid a visit to Paul's grave. This done, he prepared to return to Georgia. It was hard for him to part from his son, helpless as he was; but the interest of Miss Flora Blanchard in him, and the presence of Tony there to wait upon him, rendering his own services unnecessary, he concluded to return much sooner than he had at first intended. Moreover, he had every reason now to expect that Julian would recover. Flora followed him from the couch of his son to the door of the hospital, where she would say good-by.

“Do you return by way of Augusta?” she asked.

“Yes, with the hope of seeing Hattie. If I fail to see her I will leave a letter for her.”

“I am glad that you will go to see her. Will you tell her, Mr. Marable, that I already love her very much? And will you tell her also that I, no stranger to her, say, ‘Be brave; Julian Marable will get well?’”

Mr. Marable looked for a moment as if he thought this rather a strange message for Flora to send; but the expression quickly passing, he answered,—

“I will give her your message whether I see her or not. I will tell her this from you, and much more of you. I hope to have the pleasure some day, Miss Flora, of seeing you at Innisfel.”

“I have already been looking forward to that visit,” she re-

plied. "There are none in all the world, Mr. Marable, that I desire so much to see as Mrs. Marable and your daughter; and there is no place that draws me to it as does Innisfel."

Flora spoke with all her old candor, and something of her old spirit. There was not about her now that sparkling beauty which had made her the cynosure of all eyes on the crowded terraces of Baden. Weeks of patient watching, and weeks of patient mourning, had robbed her cheeks of their bloom, and had taken something from the exquisite roundness of her form; but to compensate for these there was revealed in the subdued light of her eyes and the serenity of her face a beauty of soul that would long linger in the memory. So thought Mr. Marable as she stood before him then. And then, as he turned from her and walked down the paved walk of the hospital yard to the gate, he silently asked God's blessing upon her and all her patient labor of love.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JULIAN AND FLORA—LOST.

THE long summer days when Julian Marable lay helpless in the hospital at Gettysburg would have been full of weariness had it not been for the presence of Flora Blanchard. And when the latter was obliged to be absent, the faithful Tony was at hand to beguile the hours of their tediousness by his homely talk of former days at Innisfel. Golden-hued, indeed, they then seemed to both master and servant.

Flora would sometimes read to the wounded soldier, and then, often, when the shades of evening began to fall, she would sing for him songs,—songs that she knew he loved, that she had sung for the two brothers in happier days; and some of them were old songs which Julian had heard when a boy, which she had learned expressly to sing for him, because she knew his mother or sister sang them. At other times they would talk together for hours, apparently heedless of the flight of time; would talk together as brother and sister might have talked who, having dearly loved each other in childhood, had been separated for many years.

To no one, save to Paul, had Julian ever opened his heart as he did to Flora Blanchard. He did this almost unconsciously. She could see what had been the burden he had been carrying all his life; she could see how, in one sense, it had separated him from those he loved, how it had led him against his will, and how, in very deed, it had poisoned his life.

It appeared to her now, at times, that this burden was detached from its long resting-place, and having rolled a short distance from him, was lying there, always in sight. Again, while really detached from its place, it still seemed to be attached to him by some ligament hardly perceptible. And, at other times, it seemed to be resting yet in its old place, only lessened much in bulk.

At the close of a September day, as they sat looking out through the single window of the apartment at the western sky, Julian said,—

"I don't know why it is, Miss Flora, but I have shown to you more of my inner life than to any one except Paul. Perhaps I might except one other."

"Hattie?"

"Yes, but why did you think of her? Why is it you have mentioned *her* before my mother or Bertha?"

"I only made a guess," replied Flora, evasively.

After a pause, during which Julian gazed dreamily out through the window, he said,—

"I was walking with her once through the cemetery at Athens. The walks were crowded with promenaders. The sight of a crowd has often had an unhappy effect upon me. When I would think how much insincerity there was in the hearts of those talking and laughing men and women, how much selfishness, how much vanity and frivolity, how much sham and falsehood; when I thought on these things, unduly magnified, no doubt, by a morbid imagination, I felt the desire to withdraw within myself. Not that I esteemed myself better than others. Oh, no! but because the whole scene, and the life it represented, appeared to me so miserable a farce, a mockery so bitter, that I would escape from it, even though forced to enter within my own dark thoughts. Ah me! I see now my error; that the fault was in me more than in the life, and that our lives are what we make them. The grandest capabilities have been before me, but I turned my head away seeing nothing, and sighed because I could do nothing."

Again he sighed, then stopped, and was looking out silently through the window.

"You commenced to tell me something of Hattie," said Flora, as if to prompt him.

"Oh, yes; I remember. I chose a position where I could observe the thronging crowds as they passed and repassed. As I said, Hattie was by my side. I was in a better mood than usual, yet I chose to indulge my cynic's spleen against my poor race. I saw young men and young ladies pass, side by side; the first had words of flattery on their lips, vain and empty thoughts in their heads, and selfishness in their hearts;

the latter had upon their faces the forced smile of the coquette, and in their bosoms, oft just fulling with womanhood, hearts shrunken and hollow, because filled with the one selfish aim,—to 'catch a husband.' You will pardon me, Miss Flora, I hope, when I say that these were the imaginings of a morbid mind. Well, to go on. I saw these,—saw the pains they were at to obtain that which when obtained they would cease to prize,—and I smiled in my soul, a mocking smile, at their folly. I saw, too, those advanced to middle life go by, man and wife. I marked the jaded and hardened look of the man's face, and the fretful and disappointed look in the woman's, and I saw in them both, and it was with a kind of devilish satisfaction, the absence of all joy. I saw the aged go by, those grown gray and wrinkled in the pursuit of that which they had never found, but which they were still pursuing with all the eagerness of children, and I mocked at their blindness and their failure. I saw a gambler pass; there was no life to him away from the faro table. Behind him came those who, unlike him, still clung to society's skirts; and I marked with what nervous care they kept their robes folded close about their persons, lest society's eyes should catch a glimpse of the corruption which they hid. The man of letters, whose mind was filled with all that books can teach, followed by the boor, whose gaping mouth and staring eyes 'bespoke the empty mind,' came by; upon them both I smiled the same Plutonic smile, and mocked them both,—the first, because he knew no more; the latter, that he nothing knew. Four preachers passed, two arm in arm, and followed by the other two; and as they went they gayly talked and laughed; and then I thought how strange that men who bore such heavy news could wear such merry faces!

"I looked upon the moving, varied throng; with morbid vision gazed farther than the smiling face; and in the gay laugh and merry voice I heard other tones, sad and discordant tones, fretful and repining tones.

"Again, a group of children passed, having all the restless activity which belongs to young and unwasted life. And, as I looked upon them, I asked myself, What are their hopes? Whither are they going? I answered thus: Those children there are full of high hope of grand success when they, some day, shall arrive at the slow-coming estate of manhood or

womanhood. Poor innocents! how many cherished hopes are to be dashed! how many bright dreams are to perish!

"Arrived at years of maturity, they leave the careless world of childhood, and enter into that which appeared at a distance as an enchanted garden, a place where they were to gather pleasures at their will,—the domain of Responsibility. They picture to their minds, as their fathers and mothers did before them, themselves the centres of so many happy homes. *Their* homes, they fondly think, will be made glad by love, whose current, deepening and broadening with years, will bear them peacefully on its placid bosom, until they find at last a summer sea where all is rest, and light, and joy. *Their* pathway will be lined with roses, will be crossed by limpid brooks, will be livened by singing-birds, and overhead will be the bright sky. Deluded children! One by one will the roses fade, and scatter their dead leaves along their way; one by one will the sparkling streams become dry, leaving here and there stagnant pools of dirty water; one by one will the singing-birds depart, while their sweet notes will be exchanged for the ill-boding hoot of the owl, and the melancholy note of the whippoorwill.

"But the years pass on,—years full of toil, full of anxious care; long years of impatient waiting; years, they may be, of brave struggling or of heroic endurance: it matters not, they will pass, and will bring to these children what they brought to yonder jaded fathers and faded mothers,—disappointment. This will be when the scales have fallen from their eyes, and when they have said unto their souls, 'I have been mocked; the love that was, is not.' The delusion gone——"

"Stop, Mr. Marable," interrupted Flora. "Tell me again, for your own sake, and the sake of all you love, that all this proceeded from a diseased mind."

"From a mind at the same time morbid, unbelieving, and corrupt. Are you satisfied?"

"Not very well, unless you make it appear that there was no 'method in your madness.'"

"That there was *none* I cannot say; let us hope there was but little. Shall I go on?"

"Yes; to Hattie."

"While I was thus sitting in judgment on the inner lives of my fellow-men, and casting their horoscopes, I was aroused

by a remark from Hattie. 'Julie, if you don't quit being so stupid I will leave you. You haven't said a word in a half-hour,—have done nothing but gaze upon the people passing by. Did you hear the pretty speeches yonder couple said about me just now, as they came opposite to us?' I saw the child's face grow a richer crimson, and a brighter light come into her brown eyes, as she asked the question. I had a vague comprehension of the situation. My first thought was a wild one: it was that, while I was dreaming, this selfish world, of which I had been prognosticating so dolefully, had endeavored to thrust itself between me and the child; and I felt a momentary impulse to fly with her from the scene. Though this wild thought but flitted through my mind, yet it left a vague dread, or suspicion of some evil, I knew not what. However, I looked down into the brown eyes that looked steadily into mine, and asked, 'But why do you blush, Hattie?—what were the pretty things?' 'I'll not repeat them, Julie,' she answered: 'they were only some foolish compliments to my—to what people call my beauty.'

"I did not reply, but we left the spot to continue our walk. I changed the current of my thoughts, and giving all my attention to my little companion, I soon found myself enjoying the ramble. We wandered, at length, from the more frequented ways. While sitting beside a hedge, which screened us from persons walking on its other side, we heard, accidentally, a part of a conversation not intended for us to hear. The few words which we heard informed us that Julian Marable was a reprobate and an infidel. We rose up, and began to retrace our steps. As we were hurrying on—for I felt as if pursued—we were stopped, in a gloomy-looking place, by old Chaffey Phipps. She wanted to know whither I was going so fast with the child. I told her, in as few words as possible. 'Hame, do you say? Whose hame?—yours or hers?' she replied, standing in the path in front of us. I then explained to her that I was going with her to where she was stopping,—a present home. 'And what's your ain hame been to her, I would like to know, but a *present* hame?' she said, with a shrill voice. 'D'ye think she'll abide there a'ways?' But I stopped her—I would hear no more—and, pushing by her, with Hattie clinging to my hand, and still like one pursued, went on. We stopped, at length, upon the brow

of a hill that overlooked the grounds. Below lay the park, with its walks and terraces still thronged with human beings. We were standing beneath a large oak that crowned the eminence; one of my hands held hers with a nervous grasp, while with the other I pointed to the moving crowds below.

“‘Hattie,’ I said, ‘a few more years, and men will come—will come to you with honeyed words upon their lips, to gain your smile, your favor; will come, and in flattery’s liquid accents will praise your beauty; and then they’ll come, and with great swelling words will tell you of their love; with lying lips each one will swear that none can love you half so well as he. Will you listen to them, Hattie?’

“‘No; how could I listen to such stories, Julie?’

“‘Well—and then they’ll come, some day, yes, *they* will surely come, and whisper in your ear that I, Julian Marable, no longer love you.’

“‘I will not believe them, Julie. I will not listen to them.’

“‘And then they will come, these same will come and whisper in your ear strange stories of my life; will call me wild, wicked, reckless: and, more than this, they will come, with artful words and mock devoutness on their lips, and tell you that Julian Marable is an unbeliever, that he scoffs at all religion, that he denies the Bible, that he has turned away from the God of his father, that he cares for none of these things.’

“While I was thus speaking to her, I noticed the carnation tints fade from her cheeks and tears gather in her eyes.

“‘But, Julie,’ she said, in tremulous tones, ‘I will not let them talk to me in this way. You are *not* wicked, you *do* believe in God and the Bible?’

“‘Hattie,’ I said, without noticing her words, ‘whatever may happen, remember that you are ours,—that you are *mine*. Have I not loved you for years? Who shall dare come between us? Tell me, Hattie, who is there, or what is there, can ever separate you from me?’

“‘No one, Julie, nothing—never!’

“‘Oh, child, remember your words!’ I answered. ‘No one, nothing—never!’

“I started to lead her on down the hill, but she hesitated. I stopped, and noticed that the tears still stood in her eyes.

“‘Julie,’ she said, ‘you did not answer me. Tell me that

you are not an infidel, that you do believe—believe in Jesus Christ ?

“ ‘ Believe what of Him, Hattie ?

“ ‘ That He—that He is good.’

“ ‘ Yes, Hattie, I *do* believe it. More than that, I believe that his life was spent in doing good to men, and that He still does them good.’ So much I could say honestly, and I said it cheerily, for I saw the suspicion which had crept into her mind, and, knowing that it would give her pain, wished, naturally, to allay it. She seemed satisfied ; and then we walked on down the hill, her hand again in mine, the color returned to her cheeks, and in her sweet, brown eyes, no longer dimmed by tears, a look of triumph, such as I had, a few times, seen in them before, and what is strange, I never see her now in my dreams—my waking dreams, I mean—but I see in her face this same expression. But pardon me, Miss Flora, for telling you this long and dull story. I never told it before, and I hardly know why I have told it now. Before closing it, however, I want to say that Hattie’s simple creed, ‘ Jesus Christ is good,’ has often come back to me. *Goodness is power.*”

“ Long and dull, indeed ! You know that I am intensely interested in it all.”

“ Miss Flora,” continued Julian, after a short pause, “ she has been taken from me, and now, every day, they are trying to alienate her affections from her old friends, from me ; tell me—you, who have a woman’s nature, can do it—will they succeed ?”

She replied by simply repeating Hattie’s words, “ No one, nothing—never.”

He seemed to be somewhat reassured by her answer. He then told her of his letter to Chaffey Phipps,—written just after the receipt of Hattie’s last to him,—the object of which was to secure to Hattie in Augusta a friend who would be bold and faithful in watching over her, and, at the same time, would keep him informed of what was passing there. “ But I never heard from Chaffey,” he said, in conclusion. “ We started on our Northern campaign before she could have replied to my letter ; so I do not know what she has done, or even that she received my request. It is this uncertainty in regard to Hattie which makes my confinement so intolerable. I could

bear it better were there any prospect of my being released in a reasonable time; but the policy of the Federal government, you know, is opposed to an exchange of prisoners."

Another month passed. During this time, Julian's wound healed rapidly. He was expecting every day an order which would transfer him from the comfortable hospital to the more dreary quarters of an officers' prison. During the latter part of this month Flora had not been to see him every day. When he first realized that he was no longer to have her daily visitations, the cheerlessness of his position was much increased; and the fact that no letter had yet reached him from Iunisfel still added to the gloom of his situation.

One day, while he was sitting in one end of his ward, listlessly holding a newspaper in his hand,—holding it listlessly because he had read every word in it, even to its advertisements,—he received a visit which served to inspire him with the hope of being released ere long, either on parole or by exchange. The visitor was no other than Malcolm Hillhouse, now a colonel in the United States army. He was accompanied by Flora. So occupied was Julian with his own miserable thoughts that he did not observe their approach until they were close beside him.

"Mr. Marable, I've brought an old friend to see you. He arrived an hour ago, and—knows all."

The two friends shook hands in silence, but with such a cordial grasp that no words were needed to express what they each felt at the moment. Then the three sat down and began to talk,—first, of recent events in connection with the war; then they awoke reminiscences of their former association, of scenes in Berlin and in Baden-Baden. Then they came back to America, back again to the war; and now the others listened as Julian recounted, in simple words, some chivalric act of Paul's in relieving the distressed or in defending the oppressed, or told of some daring deed upon the battle-field,—one of those which had made the name of Paul Marable, throughout the Army of Northern Virginia, a synonyme of gallantry. And then, led on by the questions of Hillhouse,—put, however, with tender sympathy,—he told something of that terrible night on the field of Gettysburg. He told only a part of it; how could he tell it all? His faltering voice warned him to stop. Flora

leaned her head upon her hand and silently wept; nor did the manly soldier feel disgraced by the tears that gathered to his eyes.

"Paul Marable has been taken from us," said Hillhouse, at length; "but it is a pleasant thought, Julian, Flora, that the world is the better for his having lived in it. I can see his work; can see the good which he did, and that it lives after him."

"The question," said Julian, "'Will the world be the better or the worse for my having lived in it?' is surely a solemn one. So far, it is the worse for my example and influence."

"There is yet time, I suppose, for you to mend your ways, if you have the wish to do so," said Hillhouse, with something of his old manner when speaking on such subjects.

"I do have that wish," answered Julian. "There has come to me a change. I look upon life with different eyes from what I once did. God help me to see the right and pursue it!"

"Yes, Julian," replied Hillhouse, "that is just what we want: *to see the right*,—to see it when our emotional nature is calm. I have heard men say that the startling circumstances and grim uncertainties of war had led them to think seriously of things they would never think of before. But no circumstances or events should effect that which logic alone should effect. A clearer light must come by a stronger argument."

"What stronger argument," said Flora, "can you find than in the links binding together a consistent life? or what clearer light can you have than that which shines about the path of the pure?"

"That was sentiment, and sentiment with only a sprinkle of truth in it," thought Hillhouse, but he made no reply. The conversation turned to other subjects, and, at last, to Julian's prospects as a prisoner. As soon as the question was introduced, Hillhouse, who was on his way to Washington city, at once proffered his assistance in obtaining his release. He had, he said, some influence with one holding an important position in the War Department, and he was quite confident that through this official he would be able to effect his object. He knew, he said, that some paroles had been allowed, and even some exchanges effected, through private influence. After

thus raising the hopes of his friend, and promising that he should hear from him in three days, he went away, accompanied by Flora.

Outside of the hospital yard, Hillhouse and his companion got into a carriage and drove to the depot. As the train would not leave before the end of a half-hour, they took a seat in the saloon.

"This is terrible, Miss Flora Blanchard," said Malcolm, in a low and earnest tone, as he scanned with concern the face of the woman before him.

"Speak not of that, Malcolm; it is useless."

"But I *will* speak of it. I say it is a pity that you have not a guardian, Miss Flora, with power to direct your movements and pursuits. I tried to persuade you from embarking in this work eighteen months ago, when I first heard of it; again, some months afterwards, I made a similar attempt; and now, as I look upon you, and mark how you are changed from your former self, I *must* speak."

"How am I changed, Malcolm?"

"You are pale; your form has lost that roundness it once had, your step its elasticity; your tones have a sadness in them that is unnatural, your whole bearing is changed, and—and you are grieving overmuch, Flora."

"My griefs are my own, Malcolm," she said, with just a little hauteur in her manner.

"Yes, yes; but your friends have a duty that they owe you, and I, as one of them, intend to do mine. Pardon me if I speak plainly. You have carried this sorrow in your heart—carrying it alone as you have done—too long. This, in conjunction with your self-imposed hospital duties, involving as they do loss of sleep, and constant disquietude both of mind and body, have been too much for you, Flora. If you will not give up this life, will you not take from it a few weeks in which to rest, to recruit your strength,—go to our old home on the Island?"

"What can I do there? I *must* do something."

"Let that something *now* be to regain your strength."

"You don't know what you ask me to do. I love this work. After having lived all my life for myself, and just after I have begun to live for others, and to feel something of the joy which comes from the consciousness, feeble though it be,

that my work is not in vain, you ask me to leave it. Besides, you exaggerate my weakness."

"I hope so, and yet you are sadly in need of change of scene, if not of employment. Go, Flora, and see once more the home where you spent several years of your childhood. You will find my father there. Your coming will cheer the lonely old man; for he loved you as a child, and still thinks of you as a daughter. There are several children with him, lately orphaned, the children of his first wife's sister. They sadly need, no doubt, other eyes than an old man's to watch for them."

Flora answered not for a moment, then said,—

"Malcolm, I will go, but I can stay but a short time."

"When will you leave here?"

"Not before six or seven days."

"What will detain you so long?"

"I wish to hear from you in regard to Major Marable before I leave," she replied, with some hesitation.

He glanced at her, as if to read the cause of her hesitation, but almost instantly replied,—

"Yes, stay with Marable as long as you can aid or comfort him. He has had a terrible blow. I am glad that he fell into your hands." He then changed the subject, asking for the latest news from Miss Herard.

"Aunt does not write often," replied Flora. "She is in Germany, and expresses the determination to remain there until the close of the war."

After a silence of a half-minute, during which Malcolm kept his eyes fixed upon her face, he thus went on,—

"I am rejoiced that you have consented to take a few weeks' rest. I am sure it will benefit you. Even now, in anticipation of the change, the color is returning to your cheeks, and your eyes are beginning to flash with something of their old brilliancy. Will you let me tell you—I will whisper it in your ear—no, I will not tell you. But there is the signal for me to leave you. Good-by."

During the ride back to the hospital the color still remained in Flora's cheeks, for the last words of Malcolm Hillhouse had had the effect which he intended them to have. In fact, his appeal to her had not been without art, for it was made to that passion for admiration which is in the heart of every beautiful

woman, especially those who have once received the adulations of society.

There had been a time, but not since Gettysburg, when the old love of self in Flora's heart would rise up to regain its former supremacy,—to drive out the new love that had entered there. These struggles, however, had been but momentary, always resulting in the triumph of the new love. Then, before Gettysburg, she had looked forward almost unconsciously, and with quite indefinite view, to a time in this life of partial rest and reward; now, that old happy dream, obscured and ill defined as it was, could never be realized. And so, when the words of Hillhouse came, and once more quickened into being the first strong passion of her life, immediately she saw, just where she used to see the happy picture, a very dreary waste. For a few moments she forgot the holy and sincere joy she had many times felt when relieving want and pain, and in seeing men, influenced by her own words and life, turn from the road which had been leading them to ruin, to follow Him who leads the way to heaven. She forgot all this, and saw only that the way was long, treeless, and strewn with ashes. Why should she devote her young life to these irksome and disagreeable duties? asked one voice in her heart. Why do you banish yourself from the world, that world which is ready to receive you with open arms? Because, another voice replied, you cannot now live wholly for yourself. Yet why leave society? again the first voice asked; do all the good you can, but go not so far out of your way to do it. If you go not out of your way then is your offering trivial and unworthy. And so, the two voices spoke against each other in her heart.

The result was that she saw her duty more clearly than ever before. It lay not behind the veil of a nun; its unbending form beckoned not to her from a life of ease and luxury; nor did she see it in those gay fields where, as one of society's pets, she once delighted to roam, for, on looking back over those fields now, she saw them overgrown with Lucifer flowers; but it stood before her in the same straight path she had been pursuing for months, and beckoned her on with no uncertain gesture.

On the third day after the departure of Hillhouse, a letter came from him to Flora, inclosing a note to Julian, which

stated that he had forwarded an application to the War Department in his behalf, and that he had every reason to hope it would be returned in a few days approved; and that Julian might confidently expect it within a week from the date of his letter.

The week passed, but the paper spoken of with so much confidence by Hillhouse came not. Instead of a release, came the order for a more rigorous confinement. So high had been his hope of a speedy release that the disappointment was a very bitter one.

The evening preceding his departure from the hospital Flora spent with him.

They sat and talked long together.

"Major Marable," said Flora, "I intended to start for Long Island to-morrow, but I will go to Washington, instead. I go to look up that delayed paper."

Julian looked up in surprise, and the light of hope once more kindled in his eyes.

"You will do this for me, Miss Flora?" he said. "After having done so much for me, even all that a devoted sister could have done, you are determined to do still more, to undertake this unpleasant task, which will, perhaps, subject you to rudeness? Ah, Miss Flora, I must not permit it. Do not go; leave me to my fate."

"Say no more, Mr. Julian, for I will go," answered Flora, cheerily; "and, what is more, I believe I will find the paper, and so successfully end what Malcolm began."

It was useless for Julian to oppose her, and so he had one more chance for freedom, one more chance to escape the dull monotony and privations of prison life, one more chance to be soon reunited to those he loved. With this hope kindled anew in his heart, he was more cheerful the rest of the evening. And he noticed now, for the first time, that there was some change in Flora,—that she was more like her old self.

The half-full moon had passed from the zenith down close to the western horizon ere Flora rose to say good-by. Julian rose at the same time, and stood beside her.

"Shall I see you in the morning?" he asked.

"No; I will leave by an early train. When you see me again it will be as the bearer, I hope, of happy news to you,—as your liberatress."

"You will then stop at Staten Island, where, I understand, I will be detained for a few days, and bring the papers with you?"

"Yes, if they can be entrusted to me."

She stood for one moment in silence, as if irresolute. The level rays of the moon, as they streamed in through the uncurtained window, assisted by the feeble rays of a lamp suspended in the corridor opposite, were sufficient to reveal her hesitation, but not the tears that had gathered to her eyes. When she spoke again it was with a changed voice:

"Oh, Julian, before we part, I would hear again *his* message to me. Not that I have forgotten his words,—oh, no, they are written on my heart,—but, I hardly know why, I would hear them once more."

"There is one other, Julian. She walked beside me in the pathway of life but a few months, yet the grace and brightness of her beauty have never left me. Would that I could have seen her once more, if only for a moment, to feel again the soft touch of her hand on mine, to look again into the depths of her dark eyes, and have hers look into mine, as in the happy evenings at Baden; but it may not be. Good-by, Flora, and may Christ still lead thee!"

She made no reply, only extended to him her hand, which he took in silence. And so they parted, the words of Paul still sounding in their ears and in their hearts.

Arrived in Washington, Flora lost no time in searching for the missing papers that were to release her friend. She went first to the official upon whose influence Hillhouse had mainly relied. This gentleman received her kindly, and promised her every assistance in his power. Under his direction, and through his influence, she was enabled to find and to gain access to those officials who could furnish the information desired. The result was that early on the morning of the second day she found the much-coveted papers. They had been laid away, and probably forgotten, in an obscure pigeon-hole in one of the numerous offices of the War Department.

It was with a feeling of exultation that she returned to her hotel and made her arrangements to take the next train for the North. These being made, she picked up a morning's paper to while away the hour that must yet pass before the first train would leave. In glancing her eyes along the columns

they were arrested by a familiar name,—the name of one who of late had been constantly in her thoughts,—the name of Julian Marable. Startled, and with a fainting heart, she read as follows :

“ A COLLISION.

“ Late yesterday afternoon, a barge in tow of a government vessel, and having on board a number of Confederate prisoners, on their way to Staten Island, was run into by a large steamer. Immediately after the collision, the transport was found to be in a sinking condition. The officers in charge of the prisoners made every effort to have them transferred to the steamer, but so rapidly did the injured barge fill, that it went down before all could be taken from it. It is believed, however, that all were saved except one, a Major Julian Marable, from Georgia.”

She read no further. Her head fell upon the table, and she sat there with a great, dull pain in her heart ; sat there heedless of the flight of time, heedless of all things but those fatal lines staring at her from the paper on the table. She sat there almost stunned by this sudden blow, and her heart, too, bled for those in Georgia, whose hearts, already wounded so deeply, were to be again lacerated.

It was with a heavy heart and a weary step that she left the hotel, at length, to take a northward-bound train. She went direct to Long Island, carrying with her the papers that were to have released her friend.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NED WINTER AT HOME.

ABOUT one month after the battle of Gettysburg, Ned Winter and Rich Houghton were sitting together in the room of the former. Houghton had just come in, and by his coming had roused Winter from his bed, though the sun was then half-way to the meridian. In the centre of the room stood a table, upon which were an empty bottle, three or four unwashed glasses, and a deck of cards.

"What fly was it you lured into your parlor last night, eh?" asked Houghton, glancing at the table.

"No fly this time, thou Stygian shadow," replied Winter, in his ribald way, "only my dear uncle, who dropped in to have a chat with his virtuous nephew. It is true that Sim Morris,—the innocent Sim, with an ink-hued leg,—was here; and it is also true that we did have a little game of euchre; only for amusement, you know."

As he spoke, he brought from a closet a decanter, and placed it on the table. Then, rinsing a couple of glasses, he proceeded to fill them from the decanter, saying, as he did so,—

"Come, the sight of your Plutonian visage makes me thirsty; let's take a drink."

Houghton took up his glass.

"Here is health and long life to your *dear* uncle," he said, as he drank it off.

"And here is health and a happy return to your dear friend, Julian Marable," said Winter, returning the diabolical leer of the other, as he drained his cup to the dregs.

Lighting their cigars, they sat down in front of the grate, with their feet resting against the jams supporting the mantel-piece.

"Why *his* health? what is he to me?" asked Houghton, gruffly, after a pause.

"Only this," replied Winter: "should he return, and learn anything of your present game, he would be troublesome."

"What business is it of his? What right has he, I should like to know, to interfere?"

"None at all, thou Hercules; but then I supposed that you knew it was an idiosyncrasy of the Marables to interfere in other people's affairs?"

"Damn him! let him not come here, thrusting himself into mine. I'll take nothing from any member of his family."

"No, of course not; you never did," said Winter, with a quiet sneer.

Houghton's dark face flushed, and his eyes gleamed with resentment at the words and sneer of his companion.

"That was your business, not mine," he said, angrily. "Besides, if I had not known you to be the coward you are, and that it was a case of one against two, you would have seen Paul Marable leave that room faster than he entered it."

"Ah, yes, the timorous Paul would have fled before thy Ajacian front, if—if—if—oh, those if's!" and he threw back his head and laughed a little contemptuous laugh.

"Don't be a fool, Winter; I came in on business."

"All right; proceed." And, with his feet still resting against the jambs, Ned smoked away with the utmost *sang froid*.

Houghton did not reply at once, not until he had again helped himself from the decanter. Then he said,—

"Do you think Annabel Winter has ever heard of me in connection with that runaway affair of yours?"

"If she has, she knows nothing of the part you took in it."

"Why do you think this?"

"Because, if she had heard all, her mother would, of course, know all; in which case that mother, crushed as she is, would have found means to keep you from Travis Square, or she would have taken herself and daughter away."

"The h—! she would! How is it, then, she suffers your presence there?"

"It is my good fortune that that story is known to madame only in part. As it is, she endures, rather than suffers, my presence."

"You have, then, no influence there?"

"None whatever with the ladies."

"I don't need it elsewhere; for the father, I see, already favors my suit. My broad fields have gained him; and with him on my side, the battle is more than half won. But the mother and daughter have surely heard some evil report of me."

"You think so?"

"It is clear enough. They speak only when they are obliged to, in the fewest words they can use, and with as much ice in their tones as they can put into them."

"That is unfortunate. When were you there?"

"I dined there yesterday, on Mr. Winter's invitation."

"And the ladies were quite freezing? You found that pleasant this warm weather?"

Without noticing Winter's remark, Houghton went on, speaking rather to himself than to his companion:

"And who is she, this Annabel Winter, that she should despise Rich Houghton? Am I a man to be looked down upon, to be treated with disrespect, with scorn? I'll teach her to know better some day,—to know what it is to disdain my attentions. Yes, when she becomes Mrs. Rich Houghton she will come to rue her present squeamishness, to repent of all this coldness and hauteur. By heavens! but it will do me good to sometimes see those proud eyes of hers bedimmed with tears!"

The eyes of Winter turned upon the passion-scarred face of the other with just a little surprise in them. After a pause, during which he seemed to be intently studying Houghton's features, he said,—

"I believe you would. But tell me, man, why is it you want to make this woman your wife,—a woman that you dislike?"

"Dislike? I like her better than I do any one else. But why I want to marry her I don't know, except that it's a fancy. Yet why not? she is young, pretty, and rich."

"But how are you to accomplish it? what's your plan?"

"I have no definite plan yet; I am relying mainly on the father's authority."

"You must be wary if you keep him on your side. If Horace Winter comes to know you as well as I do, he, too, will turn against you."

"I will see to that. And now, Ned, we come to the

business that brought me here. I want your help in this matter."

"I have no influence."

"Yes, you have, with Horace Winter; and you know how to work on the others. I don't expect you to do it gratis, man; you shall be paid, and well paid. I tell you the thing has to be done, cost what it will!"

"Ho, ho! you are talking that way, are you?" said Winter, helping himself to a second glass of brandy. "If you are willing to pay for it, now, there is some prospect of success, and Ned Winter is your man. In the first place, I will tell you how you can gain Horace Winter, and hold him in your interest. Make him your debtor. I happen to know that he owes just now three or four thousand dollars—debts of honor—which he finds it inconvenient to pay at this time. He was asking me last night where he could get money to cancel them. Say that you will advance it, and I will soon have it arranged. And then—then—yes, I think then I can bring it about that he puts out a few more of these notes, but to such a party as Sim Morris, for instance, who can sell them to you at a discount. We can afford to do this. You understand?"

"Oh, yes, I understand; and understand, too, how it will be a neat little game to fill your own pocket. But I would like to know what this paper would be worth to me in the end, or in case of failure?"

"It would have a par value. Horace Winter could lose thirty or forty thousand dollars in this way, and feel none the poorer for it. His property on this street alone was valued at, before the war, three times forty thousand."

"It was, eh? He has some cotton in Liverpool, I understand; how much?"

"About three hundred bales; the receipts show two hundred and ninety-five bales."

"Ha! that much? Oh, it's all right. Make your arrangements as soon as you please; I'll be ready. I think your plan a good one."

"And now," continued Ned, "we must devise some plan to mollify the mother and the young lady. You are unfortunate, Rich, in that visage of yours. Why, man, there is no need at all that they should have heard any evil report of you,

for that damnable countenance tells too plain a tale. If it were not for that, and that I knew it to be impossible for you ever to erase from it its Tartarean lineaments, I would advise that you turn over a new leaf; in other words, that you become religious."

"Not a bad idea, Ned; why can't I?" said Houghton, helping himself to a third glass of brandy.

"You will try it, will you? Now don't go too fast,—a sudden transition would carry suspicion with it. Let me put you upon a course of reading. I would advise Bunyan, to begin with. Make it a point to devote an hour or two each day to the 'Pilgrim's Progress' before you again see the ladies. Then, when you see them, dismissing from your visage, as much as possible, its infernal sneer, descant upon the simple yet marvellous—remember these words, simple yet marvellous beauties of the humble tinker of Bedford. Afterwards you can take up Baxter; and, after familiarizing yourself with his 'Call to the Unconverted' and his 'Saint's Rest,'—both of which, I doubt not, you will find exceedingly refreshing and comforting to your pious soul,—you will be able to pass for quite a hopeful convert. I will lend you these books, as I have a copy of each. In the mean time you will, of course, take pains to be seen at church, and presently at the Sunday-school. And now, having proceeded so far, you will be prepared to scatter to the winds all suspicion that may be lingering in the minds of any, by becoming a tract distributor. That will put the seal to it all; now won't it?"

"There's too much of it," said Houghton, dubiously. "I would never get through with those books! Can't you suggest something else?"

"Nothing—except the Bible."

Houghton had risen from his seat, preparatory to leaving. With a hand a little unsteady, he helped himself again from the decanter.

"The Bible!" he muttered; "what have I to do with that? The devil! I'll have nothing to do with it. Hand me the other books, Winter; I will look into them."

Receiving the books, he went on out. Winter followed him to the door with a mocking smile, and a ribald jeer at his refusing to take the Bible in addition to the others; but when he turned back into his room a very different expression rested

upon his face; it was an expression in which malevolence, anxiety, and exultation were strangely blended.

"A curse on the fool and his folly!" he muttered. "Marry Annabel Winter, indeed! But what care I how it ends, so it brings money to me? What is *she* to me, she or any one else? Nothing. Yes, I will take this fool's money, and I'll take Horace Winter's, all that I can get of it; I'll then deceive old Sim Morris—slip away from him—and leave the country. And then, in another land, with different surroundings, perhaps,—no! what a fool I am! Change, indeed! A curse on such thoughts! Away with them!"

Ned ceased his mutterings, and applied himself once more to the decanter. While he had the glass to his lips, the door was opened from without, and George Brenham, alias Sim Morris, entered. He took the precaution to lock the door behind him. This man had changed but little; yet his protruding eyes were more blood-shot, his hair and beard more gray, and his form had a more bloated appearance than when he was first introduced into these pages.

"Just in time, Morris," said Ned, himself again. "There's about one drink left."

"Who's been in?" asked Morris, proceeding to help himself.

"Our friend,—Lucius Catilina."

And then the two sat down, while Ned told the other how the plan they had together previously arranged for fleecing both Horace Winter and Rich Houghton could now be carried forward with every prospect of success.

"So far, so good," muttered the elder villain. "If we do succeed with it,—and from last night's experience, with what you have just told me of your interview with Houghton, we have every reason to expect it,—I will yet see Horace Winter where I have worked so long to bring him. He has rolled in wealth, respected by society, while I have skulked as an outcast. A curse on him! we may yet change places. But has Houghton no idea of the present condition of his affairs?"

"None; he has heard some extravagant story of the cotton in Liverpool, which I took occasion to confirm. Besides, I have given him an extravagant estimate of Horace Winter's city property. The fact is, if it were all sold to pay his debts, there would not be much left besides the cotton."

"Does he, Horace Winter, know this?"

"Yes; his last speculation was a ruinous one. It is this loss which has been driving him of late to woo the fickle goddess."

"Ned, we must push this thing through. If we make no false step,—and all things so far seem to work for us,—there is no reason why we may not land at last on the other side the water with our pockets filled with the best part of Horace Winter's estate, with a few thousand added from Rich Houghton. You must get access to his private papers; we must have those cotton receipts; and then, you have a letter from his factor in Charleston, have you?"

"Yes—talk low."

"You must practise that hand—the signature, man—you understand?" And the words were hissed, rather than whispered, by the elder villain's trembling lips, as he bent eagerly forward toward the younger.

"Yes—look out!"

And the younger, obdurate knave that he was, turned a little pale at the other's words, and instinctively recoiled before the head bent forward and the hissing words, as though they came with poisoned breath.

"Of course we must have letters of introduction, papers identifying us," continued Morris, in his eagerness not heeding the effect of his words on Ned; "and a letter from this factor, in conjunction with the receipts, will no doubt serve us. Keep your eyes open, Ned, the chance will come some day; and when it does, don't be particular to bring off only the papers relative to the cotton. If you once get your hand into his private drawer, bring off *all* papers that you find there. We must be ready then to leave."

"I'll be sure to make a clean sweep of *that* drawer," replied Ned. "But I tell you, Morris, I fear that chance of which you speak will not happen, at least in time for us. Horace Winter trusts nobody wholly."

"How many bales did he succeed in getting through?" asked Morris, without regard to the words of the other.

"Two hundred," answered Ned.

"Which, at present prices, would bring the neat little sum of forty thousand dollars. In a year it will bring fifty per cent. more. I tell you, Ned, we must have this money. If

the chance we seek delays its coming too long, we will not wait for it after our plans are perfected. There are many ways to open doors that are closed against us, and even safe-locks, that are not known to every one. There are, too, certain drugs, narcotics,—you understand?"

"Yes."

There was silence for a little time, which was broken by Morris.

"When do you look for him here again?" he asked.

"He may come in at any time."

"You must be careful, Ned, never to betray to him, by word or look, that I have ever been any other than Sim Morris. He knew me many years ago, and if, by any accident, he should recognize me now, our game would be lost. With my innocent eyes concealed by these goggles, and this gray beard on,—it has turned gray since he knew me,—he has not the slightest suspicion of me."

"You're a strange old reprobate, Morris," said Ned, eying him curiously as he spoke. "But I'll be careful. Where do you go to-night?"

"I'll be at the Alabama. Send to Peters if I am wanted."

Putting on his goggles, he unlocked the door and went out; he then, instead of going down the flight of steps that would have led him into Broad Street, turned to the left, and traversing a long, covered balcony, descended a back flight of stairs leading into an alley, where he soon disappeared through a doorway which opened in the rear of a large ale-house.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A DINNER AT TRAVIS SQUARE.

ABOUT two weeks after the conversation between Ned Winter and Rich Houghton reported in the last chapter, these two worthies, at the invitation of Horace Winter, went to dine at Travis Square.

Mrs. Winter, knowing intuitively that these two men were not fit companions for her daughter, was distant and cold in her manner. The daughter, even had she been ignorant of her mother's feelings in the matter, and left to the guidance of her own pure nature and intuition, would have felt no interest in these guests, and would have attempted to entertain them only because they were the guests of her father. Such being the feelings of the mother and daughter, it is not surprising that there was an air of constraint about all of this little party,—all of them except one,—Ned Winter.

Horace Winter seeing that his wife and daughter were annoyed by the presence of his guests, though they tried to conceal it, resented their disapprobation; nor was he careful to hide his irritation.

A while before dinner was announced, Houghton, despite his vanity, comprehended somewhat the situation, and began to feel constrained under it. He was partly reassured, however, by a whisper from Ned while on their way to the dining-room.

"The ice is beginning to melt. Don't forget your religion."

Seated at the table, Ned said,—

"I am sorry to see, my much respected uncle, that you have banished from your table the good old custom of asking a blessing on its bounties. Brother Houghton, will you ask said blessing for us?"

Houghton was so taken aback by this unexpected request that he knew not what to do or say. He turned red and stammered forth some excuse. Instead of invoking a blessing, he secretly invoked a dire curse upon the officious Ned. The

ladies would have laughed at the circumstance had they not seen impiety connected with it; while Horace Winter, restrained by no such feelings, indulged in his own grim laugh, at the same time calling on Ned to behave himself.

"I beg your pardon, Houghton," said Ned. "I wanted to give you an opportunity to show your pious raising; but your modesty prevented your improving it."

This only increased Houghton's embarrassment, and made the ladies smile, despite their efforts to let it pass unnoticed.

Houghton began to be irritated under the suspicion that Ned was making a fool of him. The latter seeing this, quickly turned the conversation into a channel which at once relieved the other, restored his self-confidence, and put him in the way of playing out the part he wished to play.

"Where were you yesterday morning, at eleven o'clock, Houghton?" asked Ned.

"I was at church."

"At church! By whom can you prove it?"

"By these ladies, perhaps, for I saw them both there." And he looked at Mrs. Winter, as if to call on her to confirm his words. But neither of them had seen him. He looked a little disappointed at this.

"I called at your room," said Ned, "at eleven o'clock, but you were out. I called again at four in the afternoon, and you were still out. Again at church, I suppose?"

"No, I was at Sunday-school."

"What? Then there is some truth in this report I lately heard, that you had come to be a regular church-goer. I did not believe a word of it, Rich, and so I told my informant that he was mistaken, that he did not know Mr. R. Houghton, that Mr. R. H. had never been to church in his life, that he knew no more of the Bible than a Piute Indian, and cared about as much as said savage for Sundays and sermons. In fact, that the said R. H.——"

"You put it rather strong, Ned," interrupted Houghton. "I know that I did care, until lately, very little for such things, and so am not surprised that you should have doubted, in some degree, what you had heard of me. But you put it rather strong. Ah, Mrs. Winter," he continued, changing his voice to a whine, as the hypocrite always does when he would counterfeit solemnity, "I must confess that I have been

a long time, a very long time, in fact, too long, a—a—what is it, Ned? You know what I would say."

"A reprobate of the first water."

"Not quite *that*, friend Ned; but still, until very lately, I have taken no interest in things—in things——"

"Physically discerned," put in Ned, imitating the whine of the other.

"Yes, physically discerned," continued Houghton, catching at the words, and not perceiving their import in his embarrassment. A glance from Ned at that moment, however, served to restore his confidence, and he went on. "The fact is, I seldom went to church; but a few weeks ago a pious friend gave me two books to read, which have had, I hope, a good effect. In fact, I believe I'm a changed man. One of these excellent books was Bunyan's *Progress*. It is a lovely book; I could read it all day; I would never tire of the simple, yet—yet——"

"Complex," suggested Ned.

"Yes; complex beauties of the tinker of Bedford. The other book is by a man named Baxter, and its title is—let me see—it is Baxter's—Baxter's——"

"*'Shout to the Unregenerate,'*" again suggested Ned.

"Yes—no, no, you have it wrong—it is the *Call* to something—to the——"

"Disconcerted," again put in Ned.

"Something like that," resumed Houghton—"Call to the Disconcerted"—not far wrong. But never mind the title. Ned, you should read these books; they would do you good."

"When I feel myself *disconcerted* I will," said Ned, with his own imperturbable gravity.

At the beginning of this conversation, Horace Winter looked up in surprise, but his worldly-wise eye saw through the flimsy veil of hypocrisy Houghton had put on, and, half suspecting his motive, he kept silent, watching with interest how he would sustain his new character. Of course, he enjoyed the blunders he made,—made, as they were, more glaring and ridiculous by the foot-lights which Ned from time to time turned on.

The pause which followed Ned's last remark was broken by Houghton. He now spoke directly to Annabel for the first time.

"Miss Winter," he said, "I met this morning an old college friend; he was a classmate, too, of your friends, the Marables."

"Who was he, Mr. Houghton?" asked Annabel, with some interest in her tones, caused, no doubt, by the mention of that name which had been so long banished from the house.

"Alec Moran," replied Houghton. "He is now a captain in the Confederate army, and will be in Augusta several weeks, he tells me. Do you know him?"

"I knew him by sight several years ago," she answered, quietly.

"By the way," continued Houghton, "he told me that the last news from Julian Marable was unfavorable; in fact, that he was not expected to live."

As he said this he turned his wicked eyes to the face of the girl sitting opposite to him, to observe their effect upon her. He was not much pleased to see that the blood wholly left her cheeks and a slight shudder passed through her frame. But Annabel, recalling to mind the words of Flora, "Be brave; Julian Marable will get well," which she had received only a few days before, in a letter from Mr. Marable, which he sent to her by hand while passing through Augusta on his way home, was enabled to still the throbbing of her heart, to summon back the recreant blood to her face, and to look up with a show of calmness, if not courage, to hear the answer to her mother's question,—

"How did Mr. Moran receive his information?"

"I did not ask him," replied Houghton. "He lives, you know, in the same county with the Marables, and being just from home, I supposed that he had it from some member of the family."

Horace Winter's brow had clouded at the first mention of the tabooed name.

"Why speak of them as Annabel's friends?" he now asked. "Her sojourn with them is a thing of the past; let it remain with the past. Julian Marable can be nothing to her."

Annabel was about to make a reply which would have increased the irritation of her father, but a look from her mother restrained her. The latter, however, ventured to say,—

"Oh, Mr. Winter, remember for how many years he was the child's brother!"

"Her brother, indeed! No, I will *not* remember it, nor do I wish Annabel to remember it."

"*Requiescat in pace*," put in Ned, *sotto voce*.

"Yes, but that is what he cannot do, I fear," spoke Houghton, resuming his whining tone. "Ah, Mrs. Winter, he was the most recklessly dissipated man I ever knew; and it seemed to be his chief pleasure to mock at religion and religious people. It is true that I myself did not then know the—ah—the—t-ruth, but I was not wholly bad. Marable, I am sorry to say, had a vicious streak—a pretty broad one, too—in his nature. I have seen him——"

But he did not finish the sentence, for he saw that Annabel, with a heightened color in her face, was rising from the table, and he suspected that he had said too much, or rather that he had gone too fast.

Annabel turned to her father, and, with a voice that trembled slightly, said,—

"You will permit me to retire, father? Whatever Mr. Marable is to me, I cannot yet quietly listen to words that slander him."

"As you please," answered the father, in a displeased tone, and with an angry flush on his face.

Houghton had turned pale at Annabel's words, and would doubtless have made an ungentlemanly reply had not the presence of others restrained him. As it was, he said, just after she had turned to leave the room,—

"I could better bear Miss Annabel's words, had they not been spoken in defence of a man so devoid of honor as is this Julian Marable."

Again Annabel faced those at the table; her face was now pale, and her eyes flashed with an indignant light; her slightly quivering lips showed that she was trying to be calm, trying to repress the resentment Houghton's last words had awakened. After standing thus, seemingly irresolute for a moment, she said,—

"Mr. Julian Marable is wounded and a prisoner; he, therefore, is a brave man who can venture to speak evil of his honor!"

She then turned and left the room. Mrs. Winter soon rose up to follow her daughter.

"Leave us your keys, aunt," said the imperturbable Ned, seeing her about to leave the room.

"The servants will attend to your wants," she answered, and went out.

Horace Winter was evidently much displeased by what had just occurred, but he knew not what action to take; so he sat still, moodily staring towards the door through which his daughter and wife had lately passed. Houghton likewise sat staring in the same direction, with the cloud on his swarthy face growing darker. They were roused at length by Ned's voice,—

"Come, Mæcenas, et tu, Catilina, atra fronte, see the care-dispelling Cæcuban, which the servant—puer—has brought forth from its hiding-place, where it was stored away, no doubt, as far back as the *Jacksoni consulem*. Come, *nunc est bibendum*. Here's to my fair cousin; may her beauty, which anger cannot mar, never fade!"

The glasses of the others not being yet filled, no response was made to the toast offered by Ned. His words, however, served to call their attention to the presence of the wine.

"And now, thou surly Richard," continued Ned, looking towards Houghton, who was slowly filling his glass, "let the Winter of thy discontent turn to glorious summer beneath the benign influence of this joy-inspiring nectar. And here is that thy Richmond may continue to drag out a miserable existence in durance vile for the remainder of this—week."

Houghton's half-raised glass was arrested at the last word, and descended to the table untouched. He scowled at Ned as the latter's low and mocking laugh fell upon his ear. Horace Winter also seemed annoyed, for he said,—

"Do, Ned, let your facetiousness take another turn. I am tired of being reminded of that fellow."

While this party of three continued at the table trying, but vainly, to find a nepenthe for their cares in the wine-cup,—for they, too, had cares, heavy cares,—there was in another apartment of the house a very different scene being enacted.

When Mrs. Winter joined her daughter in the room of the latter, she found her sitting in front of an open window, through which she was looking with a fixed gaze, and with her face wearing a forced calmness. As soon, however, as she became aware of her mother's presence, this expression left her face, and was succeeded by one all tenderness. She sprang up and threw herself into her mother's arms. She could weep now

—with that mother's arms about her—she and the mother could both weep. They stood thus for a moment, and then sat down before the open window, close together, and clasping each other firmly by the hand. The mother was the first to speak.

"Don't let this trouble you too much, my darling," she said; "you couldn't help it. You spoke only naturally."

"Was I wrong in so speaking, mamma?"

"No; you would have been a poor friend if you had spoken otherwise, or had kept silent."

"But I have again offended father."

"That the occasion arose for your speaking as you did is unfortunate; but you did not bring it about."

"Julie told me once that people would talk to me of him as this Mr. Houghton has done, and I told him then that I would not listen to them."

"You did right, my child."

"He asked me, too, who or what could come between him and me to separate us. I told him that no one—that nothing should."

"How long ago was that, Annabel?" asked the mother, with the light of a new thought coming into her face.

"It was more than four years ago. And now there *has* some one come between us to separate us, and to keep us apart. Oh, mamma, why does father so dislike Major Marable, a man whom he never saw?"

"Your father is a man of strong prejudices, Annabel,—God forgive me for saying so!—and having once had a quarrel with Mr. Philip Marable—it occurred many years ago, when they were young men—it seems that he has not only not suffered his bitter feeling towards him to die out, but has extended it to the members of his family. This feeling was revived, no doubt, and intensified, when he learned that his only child had been reared in the house of this man whom he so disliked, and that she had given the love which belonged to himself not only to another, but to an enemy. This thought was terrible to a man with his nature."

"But that feud, mamma,—I would like to know it all."

Mrs. Winter was silent for a moment, as if considering what to say.

"Ah, my child," she said at length, "if I tell you this, I

must recall a part of the past which I cannot think of without pain."

"Then do not tell it, mamma. I have already caused you too much pain."

"I have often thought, Annabel," pursued Mrs. Winter, not heeding her daughter's words, "that I ought to tell you this; it may be of some service to you hereafter. It will, at least, help to explain some things which you do not now understand. But I will make the story short, for, as I said, it recalls a period of my life to which I do not love to recur. When I met your father for the first time, I was about fifteen years of age. Young as I was, I knew that he was interested in me, and that his interest dated from the day of our acquaintance. A few weeks passed, and I was assured of the fact by his own lips. I had then but just appeared as a young lady, and having been raised by very worldly-minded people,—I was left an orphan, as you know, at an early age,—my only thought was to enjoy myself; and this enjoyment I sought only in a round of gay and frivolous pleasures. A very chief part of this enjoyment, perhaps the largest part of it, was to be found in the admiration I excited in the other sex. I began to have lovers, and then I entered into the charmed circle of the coquette. This is an ugly confession to make, Annabel, and I make it with shame; but, at that period of my life, I never indulged a thought or sentiment worthy of a true woman, so little did I understand or regard what should be the aim of life. Of life's duties I had not one sensible idea; and yet, all unworthy as I was of admiration, I had it; and not only from those who were, like myself, giddy and thoughtless, but from those whose learning and talents were known to everybody. Your father was among the first to come. He was handsome, well educated, and very wealthy; I was, therefore, flattered by his attentions. I was pleased, too, because I saw, inexperienced as I then was, that he was in earnest. Hardly knowing my own intentions or wishes, I encouraged him. A few months passed, and I became acquainted with two other classmates of your father. I had heard him speak of them both before I saw either of them. These two had been rivals at college for the honors of the class, and this rivalry, constantly inflamed by the friends of each, had been maintained to the end of their college life. I soon saw that these old rivals were to be rivals still, but in

another sphere. Knowing their position in society, their acknowledged talents, and their brilliant prospects, I confess that my head was turned by this accession to the number of my suitors. Mr. Winter was quite forgotten, for a time, in the pleasure I derived from these new conquests. He saw it, and felt it keenly. When I saw this, my conscience hurt me a little, for I knew that I had encouraged him. He soon took occasion to upbraid me for my seeming perfidy, when a quarrel, of course, followed, the result of which was that he ceased his attentions.

"I had noticed, and thought it strange, that Mr. Winter's bitter feelings were directed to only one of these two men; with the other he continued, apparently, on friendly terms, and this notwithstanding my endeavor to give not more encouragement to one than to the other. This was easy for me to do, because I had made no choice between them. It was hardly probable that I would really fall in love, or think seriously of marriage, with such sentiments as I then held, and having no object in view save present pleasure. Ah, Annabel! this picture of your mother is not a lovely one, and I have sometimes thought—shall I tell you?"

"Yes, mamma."

"I have sometimes thought that it would have been drawn the same, some day, for my darling child, if—if she had not been taken from me. How often have I thanked God—since I've known all—that you fell into *his* hands! And yet how strange that *he* should have brought you up!"

"Why so strange, mamma?"

"I will tell you directly. Never thinking seriously of the consequences of my conduct, I continued, but without committing myself to either, to make each of these gentlemen believe himself the favored suitor. I forgot to mention that at this time I was in Savannah, where I had gone to spend the winter. At length—let me hurry over this part of my story—two days passed without my seeing or hearing from either of the rivals. On the third day I read in the morning paper a paragraph which filled me with fear and remorse. Then, for the first time, I saw, and turned pale while I saw, the consequences of my duplicity. The paragraph was headed 'An Affair of Honor,' and was about in these words: 'Yesterday morning, at an early hour, a hostile meeting occurred between two young gentlemen of this

State, on the Carolina side of the river. At the first fire, one of the parties receiving a severe wound in the side, the affair was arrested by the refusal of the other to fire upon a wounded man. The whole affair is said to have been conducted with spirit, if not in the strictest accord with the rules of the duello. We have not been informed as to the cause which led to this meeting, but we have our surmises, knowing, as we do, that for some time past the principals were paying their addresses to the same young lady. For good reasons, which we have had presented to us, we forbear to mention the names of the parties.' I needed not to be informed of those names; and though I did not know the immediate cause of this affair,—nor do I know it now,—yet I knew that, in some way, my conduct was responsible for it."

Mrs. Winter paused, and placed her hand over her eyes, as if to shut out some unpleasant vision.

"Go on, mamma," said Annabel, at length, in a low voice. "Who were these two men, and what became of them?"

"One, the one wounded, was Mr. Morton Macdermot——"

"The father of Mr. Kennon!" put in Annabel.

"And the other was Mr. Philip Marable."

"Mr. Philip Marable!" exclaimed the daughter. In her astonishment she could only repeat the name, and add, in a low voice, "Go on."

"The rest is soon told. I received that day a note from each of them. In a few brief sentences they bade me good-by; neither of them made any allusion to the hostile meeting which had occurred, and each, in a gentle way, made me know that he was no longer deceived by my coquetry. I have never seen Mr. Macdermot since; I never saw Mr. Marable until he came to restore to me my long-lost darling. Heaven bless him, and his wife, and his children, for all the love and the care they bestowed upon my little Annabel!"

She stopped, and pressed to her heart her daughter, in a long and close embrace.

"You are my own Annabel," she murmured; "the same little brown-eyed Bell that I lost fourteen years ago. But I commenced to explain, as far as I could, your father's dislike to Mr. Marable. After the lapse of a few days, I learned the particulars of the duel from one who witnessed it. I then

learned that your father was Mr. Macdermot's second, and that it was through his influence that the reconciliation between the parties failed to be complete. He espoused Mr. Macdermot's side, I suppose, because he had been his friend while at college in opposition to Mr. Marable; and I have since thought that he was further influenced by the suspicion that I regarded the latter more favorably than the other. This is about all. Is it explained?"

"Nearly so. Now tell me more of yourself. You were sorry, I know, for what had occurred?"

"For a short time I almost hated myself for my levity. But by degrees this feeling wore away, and in a few months, or rather weeks, I had entered again the same frivolous and heartless life I had led before the duel. Nearly two years passed before your father renewed his attentions to me. This he did at the White Sulphur Springs, in Virginia. He has told me since that he followed me to the Springs with that intention. This was in July; we were married the following winter in Savannah."

"Did he seem to love you much then? Forgive me, mamma, for asking the question."

"Yes, darling, I understand it. While we are on this painful subject let us talk it through bravely, and then we will bring it up no more,—if we can help it. I will answer your question. Yes, he did seem to love me; nor did his love wane with the honeymoon, nor in six months, nor in hardly so many years. It is true that there were times when he was irritable and impatient, but I learned, after a while, that it was best to say nothing to him, or as few words as possible, while he was in these moods. These periods of moodiness and impatience, however, gradually became longer and more frequent, until at length he became—but failing health has had much to do with it. Oh, let us not think hardly of him, my child!"

"No, mother, we will not."

"If he is impatient, let us try to be patient; if he is harsh, let us be always gentle."

"Yes, mother, we will, we will try."

"If he is cold, my child, and caring nothing for our love, yet will we still love him."

"We will, mother."

"And then we'll study more diligently than we have done what things will add most unto his comfort."

Thus talked the mother and daughter. In his own room sat Horace Winter, alone, for his guests were gone. Poor man! the wine he had freely drank failed to dispel *his* cares. Poor man! He was to be pitied far more than that patient wife who, even then, despite his long neglect and often cruel scorn, was making excuses for him, and pledging her love to him anew. More to be pitied was he than that gentle daughter, whose pathway his sins filled daily with thorns instead of roses. He got up and paced nervously the room, muttering to himself as he walked, sometimes with quick and nervous gestures, and always with a scowling brow.

"Mother and child—how much alike!" he said. "To be thus braved, and at my own table! To have my guest insulted! I'll let them know that I will not submit to it. Am I not master in this house? I'll teach them that I am. Even now, I dare swear, they are scheming together how to thwart my purposes, how to make null my authority! As is the mother, so is the daughter. How often have I seen that same proud look, with which she went off, on her mother's face! Yes, like her mother in her wilfulness. Houghton, I would have thought, had seen enough of her, especially of her dislike to himself, to make him drop the suit. Ha, ha! what a fool the fellow made of himself talking about Bunyan and Baxter! No; Houghton is not a man to be thrown from his track by trifles. All right; why should she not marry him? He is rich; is not that enough? Besides, he is my creditor to the extent of several thousand,—a trifle in ordinary times, but if he pressed his claims just now I would be worried."

He ceased his mutterings for a while. Then there passed slowly before his mind's eye the picture of his patient wife and daughter busying themselves, as he had often seen them, about his own comfort. Then for a moment his conscience smote him, and he asked himself the question, Are you not, Horace Winter, unjustly harsh to that wife and daughter? But the evil angel that had taken possession of him quickly drove out the good one that had for a moment gained the ear of his soul. Again the scowl came upon his face. "D——n! —no," he muttered, impatiently and fiercely, "I am not. Unjust, indeed! Am I not opposed at every turn?—my

wishes disregarded? It is not enough that I am harassed by misfortunes without, but I must find them doubled at my own fireside!"

And thus was a home, which might have been radiant with light and happiness, filled with darkness, because one man chose to follow the evil rather than the good that was in him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ANNABEL HEARS NEWS OF JULIAN.

MISS CORA MCNAIR had been now, for two years, Mrs. Lester. Still young, handsome, and the wife of a rich man, she was by no means inclined to surrender the place she had so long held in fashionable society. She was therefore still to be seen at all those places of public amusement and those social gatherings where she had been wont to shine as a belle. She liked, too, at times, to have a party at her own house. So, despite the dense clouds that lowered over the country, and the hardness of the times, Mrs. Lester determined to give a large ball in November, 1863.

The handsome residence of Mr. Lester, situated in the most fashionable quarter of the city, was lighted up at an early hour on the evening appointed for the party. The beautiful grounds in front were likewise brilliantly illuminated; while in one part of them was stationed a band of musicians to welcome with sweet and stirring sounds the guests as they arrived. Among these guests were to be found the *élite* of Augusta, while many of them were officers of the army.

Had Annabel Winter consulted only her feelings, she would not have been there. Under ordinary circumstances she would have enjoyed the pastimes and social intercourse of such an occasion, but she had not yet lost sight of Gettysburg. She was still mourning, though four months had passed, her lost brother; how could she then give herself up to pleasure? Besides, Mr. Rich Houghton would be there, which fact alone would have been sufficient to dampen the pleasure she would otherwise have experienced. She was there, because there were others to please besides herself. Having once decided to go, she would try, for the time, to forget her sorrows; and, like the real woman she was, would use all means to render herself attractive, which, with the instinct of a beautiful woman, she knew how to do.

In the early part of the evening, two young men, Ned Winter and Alec Moran, left the house together, and walked through the grounds until they came to a summer-house. Stopping within the shadow of this, Ned drew from a side-pocket a small flask, and handed it to his companion. Moran swallowed an almost imperceptible portion of its contents, and handing it back remarked that it was too strong.

"Why, this is fine blockade brandy, man: you've no throat at all if this makes you cough." So saying, Ned half emptied the flask before withdrawing it from his lips.

"And you must have a gullet of steel to swallow such stuff in that way," replied Moran.

"I suppose there's something in being used to it," remarked Ned, in an indifferent tone, replacing the flask in his pocket.

"Yes, Ned, she *is* beautiful," said Moran, resuming a conversation begun in the house; "and—I might as well own up—I am in love with her."

"And what is your prospect?—let's sit here on this bench a while. You've called on her several times recently?"

"Yes; but I don't know how she regards me. Tell me honestly, is any one ahead of me?"

"None; you have a fair field."

"That's some encouragement, at least. I may consider Houghton a rival, I suppose?"

"I suppose so, but you need not fear *him*. 'Fire and Brimstone' are written too legibly across his face. There is one, however, who would be in your way, if he were here."

"Who is he?"

"Julian Marable."

"Ha!—why do you think so?"

"I learned it—accidentally, of course—from a letter of his to her."

"A love-letter?"

"No; at least, it was not so meant."

"But he, when last heard from, was severely wounded, and a prisoner. Surely I should not feel much uneasiness on his account?"

"No—not if you can win the lady before his return."

"Well, I wish Julian no particular ill-luck, but I won't grieve much if he remains where he is long enough for me to consummate matters."

"And yet," pursued Winter, looking across his companion with his crescent eyes, "if you are wise, you may shake her faith in Julian."

"How?"

"You must proceed about it carefully. Speak of him highly, and as if you regarded him with great friendship. Then lament, gently and delicately, his heretical beliefs; and then, as the result of holding such opinions, his moral obliquity."

"I understand."

"But you can make a stronger point than these against him."

"What is it?"

"Excite her jealousy. Tell her of a certain young lady he met in Virginia, between whom and himself there is now an actual engagement."

"But I never heard of this—is it a fact?"

"Certainly it is," replied Ned. "It is known to only a few; I happened to learn it from one of his men who was passing through here. This man, with his captain,—it was before Marable's promotion,—had been detained by sickness a couple of weeks at the house of the lady's father; he had, therefore, every opportunity of knowing the truth of what he told. You need feel no hesitation in speaking of this as a fact; but do it carefully; and I prefer that you do not tell from whom you received it."

This was an invention of Winter's, and made on the spur of the moment; yet he told it with such emphasis and seriousness that it was an easy matter for Moran, wishing as he did to believe it, to receive it just as it was told.

"This is a strong point—I will remember it. 'All things are fair in war and love,'" he added, by way of quieting his conscience, which was becoming somewhat ruffled at his purposed baseness; and to the same end he made another effort to imbibe a portion of the cognac, which Winter again proffered to him as they rose to return into the house.

As they entered the doorway, Ned stepped back to speak to Houghton, who had just arrived.

"Thou art late, Lucius," said Ned, taking Houghton by the arm and leading him to one of the windows that opened on the portico. "What detained thee?"

"Business, Winter, business," replied Houghton, evidently in a better humor than he had appeared in for some time.

"What nefarious business was this, Catilina?"

"Nothing nefarious this time, Ned. Happening to see a bit of news in the evening's paper—which was later to-day than usual—in reference to one Julian Marable, and copied from a New York paper, I took the trouble to hunt up the said New York paper that I might be sure there was no mistake about it—that our paper had reported it correctly."

"What is the news?" asked Ned.

"Why, it is nothing more than that another member of the Marable family has gone where he will not be apt to interfere any more in other people's affairs."

"Is that so?—let's see the paper."

Houghton handed him the paper, and pointing to the paragraph Winter read it by the light that streamed through the window.

"It is even so," he said, as he handed back the paper. "Your prospects are brightening. But be careful; don't show that here to-night."

"Why not?"

"It will do you no good."

"The h—! it won't!—it will do me no good, you think, to see her turn pale, and tremble, and see those proud eyes fall beneath mine?"

"She will hear it soon enough—but do as you please."

"Who is the attraction in yonder group?" asked Houghton, pointing through the window to a little party of gentlemen within.

"The attraction there," replied Winter, "is none other than Miss Annabel Winter."

"I thought so. She has then, it seems, smiles for everybody but Rich Houghton. Ha!—Have you seen Moran?"

"Yes—but the news you bring of Julian renders that little play unnecessary. Shall I tell it to Moran?"

"No; let him play it out: it will, at least, worry her by that much the more. And then—let *him* keep out of the way!"

"Aye! let no one come in Gloster's way, the noble Gloster's. But—not to ramble—did you bring anything to drink?"

"No; I expected you to do that."

"So I did—a small supply, which is nearly out. I'll take your buggy and drive back to town to replenish my flask."

"All right. Let me know when you return."

Houghton passed within, and entered the room in which he had seen Annabel just in time to hear Mrs. Lester say to her,—

"Ah, Miss Annabel, I am so glad that you came out this evening! No party will be complete without you after this. You put me so much in mind of that lovely sister of yours, Miss Bertha Marable. Not that you are like her in person, for your style of beauty is quite different from hers. Have you heard from her recently? No—I would like so much to see her. And your brothers—what noble young men they were! Ah, Miss Annabel, how grieved I was to hear of Mr. Paul Marable's death! He was so very talented, so frank, so amiable! Have you received any late news of Major Marable?"

"It has been about two months since I last heard from him," replied Annabel. "He was then considered out of danger."

"You will hear from him again sooner than you expect," thought Houghton, with a fiendish glare in his eyes.

"I do hope he will get well," continued Mrs. Lester. "By the way, Miss Annabel, a thought has just struck me," and she now looked at Annabel with a coquettish glance: "I understand it all now. I was with Major Julian Marable once, when his fortune was told by old Chaffey Phipps—you remember old Chaffey, I suppose? Well, she told it in verse, and made it really very interesting. I cannot recall it all, but I remember distinctly two things in connection with the lady who was to be his 'fortune.' One was that she had known him, and been with him constantly through a long time; the other was that she was an Augustan belle. I thought, of course, that he had been paying attentions, more than usual, to some young lady from Augusta. It is plain that I was not meant, though Mr. Marable tried—not very hard, I must confess—to make me believe the contrary. I could think of no one to whom old Chaffey's words could possibly refer, nor could any of those to whom I repeated them, so this fortune remained a puzzle to me. But I understand it *now*. I re-

member now your bringing him a flower, and how he followed you with his eyes. Do I not see before me the Augustan belle—you are doubly a belle—of old Chaffey's verses?"

For the first time in Annabel's life was this thought in connection with Julian presented to her mind. There flashed vividly through her soul the thought that she and Julian might be more to each other than brother and sister.

This thought was so new and strange, and came so unexpectedly, that she knew not what reply to make to Mrs. Lester, so she stood silent, blushing like the dawn, in this, the first recognition of her young heart's love. But her embarrassment was only momentary; by a great effort she was able to send back most of that tell-tale blood from her cheeks, and to speak in Mrs. Lester's own light and coquettish style.

"But you should not have told it here, Mrs. Lester; for who knows how many of these young gentlemen you have now discouraged? That was hardly fair."

As she ceased speaking, the next cotillon was called, and the little group was dispersed. Mrs. Lester, taking Annabel by the hand and passing her other arm around her waist, led her away. The eyes of Houghton, like those of a basilisk, followed them.

"I'll soon take the bloom out of those pretty cheeks," he muttered. "The belle of old Chaffey's verses, indeed! It is easy enough to spoil that pretty story."

As the two ladies went away together, Cora whispered,—

"I was afraid for you for a moment, but you turned it off nicely. You deceived the rest, perhaps,—it is easy to deceive those who want to be deceived, as most of them there did,—but I do believe now that old Chaffey knew what she was saying."

Annabel made a laughing reply, but she would have given much to have been then by herself, for, despite her present surroundings, there came back vividly to her mind many a well-remembered scene between Julian and herself. These old memories came crowding upon her, and bringing with them a thrill of pleasure they had never brought before. If she had been alone how she would—yet timidly—have welcomed them; as it was, they could only share her attention. Mrs. Lester left her presently, and then, seated in the obscurity of a bay-window, she had the isolation she wished for.

Among other scenes that came back to her then was the one in the cemetery at Athens. She could recall every word that was then uttered; and it was with an acute sensation of pleasure that she recalled Julian's nervous grasp of the hand, and the eager, searching glance of his eyes, as he stood with her on the top of the hill and pointed to the people moving below. The tones of his voice, almost fierce in their earnestness, came back with vivid distinctness. With a glowing cheek she repeated to her soul his words:

"Hattie, you are *mine*. Have I not loved you for years? Who shall dare come between us? Tell me, Hattie, who is there, or what is there, can ever separate you from me?" and again she answered, "No one, Julie, nothing—never!" And then repeating Julian's reply,—“Oh, child, remember your words,”—she added, “Yes, Julie, I *will* remember them.”

At this point in her retrospection a figure passed between her and the light, and Alec Moran took a seat beside her in the window.

"I have sought for you everywhere, Miss Annabel," he said. "I was present when Mrs. Lester was giving us Major Marable's fortune, and the interpretation she put upon it so absorbed my attention for some minutes that I lost sight of you."

"I do not understand you," said Annabel, in a questioning tone.

"I mean that I was weak enough to let the words of Mrs. Lester worry me. When, by an effort, I dismissed them from my mind, and looked up, you were gone. But I have found you, and five minutes here are more than so many hours elsewhere."

"Ah, captain, be candid now, and tell me if you did not say the same thing to Miss Simpson, yonder, with whom I saw you half an hour ago, and the very same thing to Miss Jones, standing opposite to her? And, I dare say, Miss Smith, there, the one standing near the door, is flattering herself that Captain Moran would rather spend five minutes in her company than so many hours with any one else."

"Miss Annabel, you are mocking me. You know that whatever I may have said to others to while away the sluggish moments, I have been sincere in all that I have said to *you*."

the Army of Northern Virginia. If I could go bearing with me the hope that you would some day listen to me with more patience, would regard my suit with more favor, I would go with new strength, superior to every ill that might befall me, and prepared to meet with patience and fidelity every demand of my country."

"Let me hope, captain, that you will be always ready to serve your country, and from a higher incentive than the one you speak of."

Her words and manner plainly revealed the hopelessness of his suit, yet he asked,—

"Then I am not to have that incentive?"

"I am sorry that you force an answer," she replied, "for I cannot encourage that hope."

A change came upon Moran's face at her words. When he spoke again his manner was formal and his tones hard. He had risen from his seat and was standing in front of her, with his back to the light.

"Before bidding you good-by," he said, "permit me to tell you a bit of news of our friend, Julian Marable,—anything in connection with him will be interesting, no doubt. I obtained my information only this evening, but from undoubted authority. In a Virginia village lives a man possessed of three beautiful daughters. Julian Marable was an inmate of this man's house two weeks, detained there by sickness. When restored to health, as he had opportunity, he visited this house where he had been nursed by the three lovely sisters. The result was an engagement between himself and the youngest of the sisters. Report further says that after he was wounded at Gettysburg the lady went North to look him up, that she might again assist in restoring him to health,—with what success is not known."

With a stiff bow he turned from her and went away.

Before he had ceased speaking Annabel was standing before him, erect, with a pale face, but with a proud and indignant light in her eyes. She made no reply to him in words, but when he ceased, with a quiet gesture, she waved him away. So calm and proud was her bearing that he went away not in triumph, but like one foiled in attempting a mean revenge.

No sooner had he passed from sight than she retreated again to the obscurity of the window, and there, covering her now

she knew that Houghton would not scruple at putting forward any story—even at having it published—which would annoy her. It was this thought alone that had kept her from falling when she first heard the fatal words, “he is dead.” Weary, faint, and sick at heart, she reached home at last.

Her mother was awaiting her. She leaned heavily on her mother’s arm, as the latter led the way to her own room.

“I have a letter for you, Annabel,” she whispered; “and you would be surprised to learn from whom it is, and also by whom brought.”

Mrs. Winter had caught sight of her daughter’s pale face, and this, with the heaviness with which she leaned upon her, and her uncertain steps, alarmed her. But she did not stop then to ask the cause of it; she sought rather to counteract its force—whatever might be the cause—by directing her attention to something else. The wisdom of her course was at once apparent.

“From whom is it, mother?”

“Major Marable.”

A little color crept back to the girl’s cheeks, and her step became more firm.

“Then this news that *he*—Mr. Houghton—told me—which is told here”—and she showed the paper she still carried in her hand—“is false.”

“What is it, Annabel?”

“That he is dead,” and she spoke the words in a hard and unnatural tone.

“It surely is,” said the mother. “I cannot believe it. Perhaps he—Mr. Houghton—is the author of it.”

It was the same thought that Annabel had had, and her mother’s having it had the effect to still further reassure her.

When seated in her own room, the mother told how, a few hours before, she had been called to the kitchen by one of the servants, to see some one there who wanted to speak to her and “Miss Hattie.” On going to the kitchen, she found there a young negro man who introduced himself as Tony, the servant of Major Marable, and who, at the same time, handed her a letter, which he said was for Miss Hattie. “I then,” continued Mrs. Winter, “after making some inquiries as to his master’s condition, told him to wait where he was, and I would bring you to see him when you returned, as you would like to

There was something in the voice which dispelled the smile from Tony's face, and made him look at her more closely. Then, with a bowed head, for the tears had started to his eyes, he took the hand she held out to him, took it reverently, and as if fearful of hurting or soiling it in his big and roughened hand.

"Oh, Miss Ruth!" he said, "if she could only go back to her old home for a while and gallop over those hills with Miss Bertha, like she used to do! But excuse me for talkin' so, for I know somethin' of how it is,—only I wanted so much to see Miss Hattie looking like she used to."

When the mother and daughter had sat down in front of the fireplace, the latter said,—

"Now, Tony, tell us all that has happened,—from the battle to the day of your leaving the hospital."

With his arm resting against the mantel, and in a low voice, Tony told the whole sad story. During its recital he kept his eyes, for the most part, upon the embers on the hearth, only turning them occasionally towards his auditors; while, now and then, he turned his head in the opposite direction to brush away the tears that would rise at the recollection of the scenes he described. Tony was a skilful narrator, because he told his story in a simple and straightforward manner. He told how he had found the two brothers on the fatal morning of the Fourth of July; how Miss Flora had found them and himself; in what manner she had buried Paul; how she had nursed Julian; how the latter had talked in his delirium; of the father's visit; of the son's recovery; of the visit of Colonel Hillhouse to Miss Flora, and his interest in getting Julian released; of Flora's departure for Washington; and, finally, of the leave-taking between his master and himself, and ended it all in the very words of the last injunction of that master to him, "Take this letter, Tony, and be sure that you deliver it into Miss Hattie's own hands, or into those of her mother."

Tony's voice broke a little as he closed, and his head was again turned away.

Neither of his auditors had spoken while he was telling his story. At its conclusion there was a pause of a few moments, which was broken by Annabel.

"Can you tell anything more he said during his delirium?" she asked.

Julian ; that the last thing he wrote to me was to believe no evil news that might come to me of him. Good-by."

Mrs. Winter would have much preferred to have seen Anabel facing the terrible truth than thus seeking to evade it. Her eagerness to evade it was evidence to her of her inability to face it when there should be no longer any room to doubt it.

The gray dawn was filling the house with a sombre light as they retraced their steps. Tony followed them through the door, and was soon hurrying along the silent street, with his head bowed and a haggard look on his face, hurrying on to that home to which the evil news that bewildered him was then hurrying on far in advance of him, to shroud it once more in the gloom of death.

The place was distant about five miles from
was ten o'clock in the morning.

Martha was dressed in black; she was a little pale,
great sorrows she had borne the previous
ble in the subdued expression of her face, or

the absence of its former joyousness. Yet she had
her rare beauty. As she sat her horse that

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leading his regiment in a charge. Besides

was a white plume, which Martha recogni

ever had more than a year ago, when he v

led at his return to the army after a leave o

which it was surprising it was still by

others. He did not wear this plume a

which was unusual.

one corner one of Colburn's sons," said I

is a single moment that changed from t

the side of the creek, and who came across

the bridge in full speed. "Colburn has a

son in the service," continued Macdermot.

He is the most daring of them all. I have

seen him many times. Colburn. I know I

he was once seen a week since you

and he has been seen since that time

and he has been seen since that time

and he has been seen since that time

and he has been seen since that time

and he has been seen since that time

and he has been seen since that time

Tony. The place was distant about five miles from Innisfel, the time was ten o'clock in the morning.

Bertha was dressed in black ; she was a little pale, and traces of the great sorrows she had borne the previous year were still visible in the subdued expression of her face, or rather in the absence of its former joyousness. Yet she had lost nothing of her rare beauty. As she sat her horse that morning, her veil thrown back from her face, and looking with fearless eyes towards the spot where the enemy was momentarily expected, Kennon Macdermot thought her, if possible, more beautiful than he had ever before seen her.

Philip Marable looked older than when last seen in these pages, yet he still looked the man of calm energy and determined will, nor was his physical force abated.

There was little change in Macdermot ; his beard was long and flowing, and he wore moustaches. Around his hat was a band of crape, and on his face was a serious expression, not there before the fight on Missionary Ridge,—he was still mourning the loss of his father, who fell in that battle, while gallantly leading his regiment in a charge. Besides the crape, his hat bore a white plume, which Bertha recognized as one she had given him more than a year ago, when he was passing by Innisfel on his return to the army after a leave of absence. She recognized it, notwithstanding it was soiled by the smoke of many conflicts. He did not wear this plume always, only when a battle was imminent.

"There comes one of Colbert's scouts," said Macdermot, pointing to a single horseman that emerged from the hills on the opposite side of the creek, and who came across the fields towards the bridge at full speed. "Colbert has some of the best scouts in the service," continued Macdermot, "and they say that he is the most daring of them all. Yonder horseman is no other than Major John Colbert. I know him by the red sash he wears,—made from a scarf that you gave him, Miss Bertha. See, he has passed now behind that clump of trees, and you will soon see his command pass over the bridge to our side of the creek. When he, or one of his scouts, appears riding as he is now doing, we may confidently look for the enemy following close upon him."

As he ceased speaking, the head of Colbert's battalion emerged from a small wood which had hitherto concealed it,

and was soon filing across the little bridge that spanned the creek. No sooner were they all across than the head of the Federal column appeared where the road left the hills to enter the valley.

At this instant Macdermot turned to Mr. Marable and said,—

"My place is now with my regiment. Before I leave you let me urge you to take Miss Bertha and yourself to a less exposed position."

"Yes, Bertha must go to the rear," replied Mr. Marable. "I will remain; perhaps I can be of some service. But tell me, colonel," he continued, intently watching the movements of the enemy, "why it is we cannot hold our position here; is surely a good one."

"For two reasons: first, they so far outnumber us that it is an easy matter to flank us; secondly, as soon as they get their batteries into position on yonder hills, these that we now hold will be untenable. See, they have thrown forward a skirmish line. Miss Bertha, let me beg that you will go at once to the rear."

"Why do you ask *me* to fly?" said Bertha, while a new lustre shone in her eyes. "Am I not a good rider? Rather give me one of your holsters, and let me go with you."

"No, no, my child," exclaimed Mr. Marable, in a determined tone, "you know not what you say. I will myself lead you to a place of safety. Follow us, Tony." So saying, he immediately led the way to the rear.

Kennon's admiring eyes followed her as she rode away. "How it would fire my regiment, all but myself! But me would unman," he muttered, as he turned to rejoin his command.

His regiment was in position to support a line of skirmishers stationed along the bank of the creek. The Federal skirmish line came forward boldly, followed at some distance by a brigade in line of battle. While a scattering fire was kept up by the skirmish lines of both armies, a body of Federal infantry was seen filing to the right, with a view of crossing the creek a mile above the bridge, and so to turn the Confederates left; at the same time a large body of cavalry was seen deploying to the left, its object being to ford the creek far enough below the bridge to be on the right flank of the Co

federates. In the mean time their field batteries were being rapidly brought into position.

And now the Federal skirmish line has disappeared, and their line of battle, marching forward at a quick pace, halts and pours a deadly fire into the thin covering of bushes along the margin of the creek which has hidden the Confederate skirmishers. Those of the latter that escape return a shout of defiance, empty their rifles for the last time at the advancing line, and then retreat to the rear of the regiment supporting them.

Macdermot's regiment of Alabamians, with a Georgia regiment on its right, now came into action. Their first fire checked the brigade in front of them. For a half-hour the two lines maintained a spirited engagement, neither showing the least disposition to give way.

From an eminence some distance in the rear, Mr. Marable and Bertha had an unobstructed view of the whole scene.

"Our men cannot stand much longer, Bertha," said Mr. Marable, at length. "See, the enemy are being reinforced; and look at the numbers who have crossed the creek above, and are ready to bear down upon us. Their cavalry, too, are crossing below, and will soon be ready to join in. I must go to the front, for I see our men beginning now to fall back. Bertha, you must gallop home. Tell your mother how matters are going. Good-by!"

Before he ceased speaking the enemy had opened their batteries, and the shrieking and bursting of shells not far from them prevented Bertha from hearing the injunction of her father. Mr. Marable galloped off without waiting to see that his daughter had followed his instructions.

The high-spirited girl, undaunted by the dangers around her, continued to gaze with fascinated eyes upon the scene. As she looked, she saw the Confederate line give way, then break in disorder; at the same moment she saw one mounted, and wearing a white plume, ride furiously along the broken line, vainly trying to check the growing rout. A sudden thought flashed through her soul, at which her cheeks flushed and her pretty lips were compressed, making her look now more like her father than her mother. Grasping her reins more tightly in her left hand, and speaking in low, quick

which Macdermot was transferred, Bertha taking a seat beside him in the rough vehicle. Mr. Marable, followed by Tony, rode on to prepare for his reception at Innisfel, and for the reception of others, too desperately wounded to be carried farther, who might be left there.

About five o'clock in the afternoon the ambulance arrived at Innisfel. When Mr. Marable and his wife went out to it they found Macdermot lying insensible on one of its seats, with his head resting on the lap of Bertha. He had fainted through loss of blood, and the continued pain produced by the jolting of the vehicle. As he was borne into the house Bertha followed, leaning heavily on the arm of her mother. Bertha was no Zenobia; she took no pleasure in the scenes she had that day witnessed and taken part in. She had been made a participant in them rather by accident than otherwise. Her nature was gentle and thoroughly feminine. Arrived at home, and feeling around her the arms of her mother, that spirit which had sustained her through the trying scenes just narrated suddenly left her, and with it went her strength. As she entered the door of her own room she sank to the floor insensible. This weakness, however, was brief; a few hours of rest were sufficient to restore to her her strength.

Later in the afternoon the Confederate troops began to pass Innisfel. As the infantry came opposite the house, at a signal from the officer in command three loud cheers were given for Mr. Marable and his brave daughter. Last of all came Colbert's battalion. John Colbert, with his left arm bandaged and in a sling, galloped towards the house. Mr. Marable was standing at the gate when he came up.

"So you leave us to the tender mercy of the enemy?" he said, as the other reined in his horse.

"I am sorry that it is so, God knows," replied Colbert; "but the order is to stop and intrench at Rome, which we may be able to hold one or two days. When the main army passes below Kingston, we must, of course, abandon Rome. Do you remain here with your family?"

"Yes; I apprehend no danger. To leave our property is to invite destruction to it. I have, however, sent my negroes below,—all but three."

"I heard that Colonel Macdermot is wounded. He is with you, I suppose?"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE FEDERALS AT INNISFEL.

THE next hour was full of anxiety to Philip Marable, despite the confident tone of his answer to Colbert. It had not yet expired when a few mounted scouts came in sight. These were followed, at a distance of two hundred yards, by the main body. Several regiments of infantry, marching in good order, passed by. These were followed by the artillery companies; after which came a large body of cavalry. A few stragglers up to this time had come to the house, but seemingly with no other purpose than to fill their canteens at the well.

Mr. Marable was beginning to hope that they would all pass to the other side of the creek, and so he would escape the annoyance, if not serious evil, which would result should their encampment for the night be in close proximity to his premises. But this hope was short-lived, for, ere it was well formed, he saw that a regiment of infantry—the rear-guard, no doubt—had halted in the wood across the road, evidently to camp there for the night; at the same moment he noticed four men entering the small gate which opened into the flower-garden. They had come up by a path through the woods on the right of the lawn, and so had reached the gate unobserved. They were rough-looking men, and carried their guns and accoutrements, as though they had just left the line. Without hesitation they advanced up the steps and entered the portico.

Mr. Marable, followed by Tony, at once went out to them. As he looked upon them steadily with his calm gray eyes, they seemed a little abashed, but only for a moment. In answer to his question, "What do you wish of me?" the foremost, a tall fellow, answered,—

"Only a bit o' rations, misther. We'd tak' a peep, if ye please, into your mate-house. Come, hand us ower the keys,—we'll be aisy on ye."

sternly. Then turning to Mr. Marable, and speaking in a changed and courteous tone, he somewhat startled him by saying,—

"If I am not mistaken, I see before me the father of Julian and Paul Marable?"

"You are not mistaken; my name is Philip Marable. You were acquainted with my sons?"

"I was; they were my fellow-passengers across the Atlantic, and we were almost daily companions during the greater part of our sojourn in Europe. My name is Malcolm Hillhouse."

"I am glad to meet you, Colonel Hillhouse. Though in the position of an enemy, you have shown yourself a brave and generous one; therefore, for your own sake, as well as for the sake of my sons, I offer to you the hospitality of my house while you are in the neighborhood."

"I accept your offer, Mr. Marable, because I believe it to be sincerely made. My regiment will bivouac in the wood just across the road. As soon as my orderly returns, I will send him back for a guard to place around your premises, who will see to it that your property is not molested during our stay here."

While Mr. Marable was returning thanks for the offer of the guard, the orderly returned with a sergeant and a file of men. The four house-burners were speedily handcuffed, two and two, and marched to the camp across the road, the sergeant carrying with him an order to send back a corporal and six men for guard duty. After this the three gentlemen entered the house.

As soon as Colonel Hillhouse learned that there were three wounded Confederates in the house, one of whom was Colonel Macdermot, whose name he remembered to have heard mentioned by both the Marable brothers, he sent for the surgeon of the regiment, expressing at the same time great confidence in his skill.

Macdermot had been restored to consciousness soon after his arrival at Innisfel, and was resting quietly when the surgeon entered his room. Mr. Marable and his wife were both present during the examination of his wound. The ball had entered the left side, and, passing through the body, broke one of the lower ribs in its passage. The wound, though a painful one, and one that would require several weeks in which to

Flora's present disposition you are of course acquainted, since Mr. Marable's visit to Gettysburg. The great change in her I believe to be due entirely to the influence of Paul Marable. The good that he has done will live after him—will it not live through all time? After learning from Flora all that she could tell of Paul's death, I went with her to see Julian. He was then almost entirely well of his wound. He was, however, in low spirits at the near prospect of his transfer to prison life. I had a friend in Washington City, holding an important position in the War Department. I felt quite confident that through his influence I could obtain Major Marable's release on parole. Revealing to him my intention, and the probability of my success, he seemed much elated. After a most pleasant interview of several hours, during which we revived many agreeable memories, I left him. On my arrival at Washington, as soon as the business which carried me there was despatched, I made application for the release of my friend. Accompanied by my friend in office, I went with it to the office of the War Department, where I soon had the satisfaction of seeing it returned with the last 'Approved' affixed to it. I was obliged to leave it there, however, to be regularly forwarded, which would certainly be done, I was told, in three days. I wrote to Flora and Julian, telling them what I had done, and what to expect. About three weeks after my return to the army, I received a letter from Flora, telling me of the failure of the paper to reach the hospital, and of Julian's departure therefrom. She told me, too, how she had gone on to Washington and looked through the offices until she had found the paper, and how, just after she had returned to her hotel and placed it safely in her trunk, she had found that other paper telling of the collision so fatal to him for whom she had striven so faithfully. Poor Flora! I saw where her tears had fallen upon the page. She had cut from the newspaper the account of the collision, and enclosed it in her letter. After reading it I could not believe that Julian had lost his life in that manner, and I therefore watched the papers, hoping to learn that he had been afterwards found."

"We indulged the same hope for a while," said Mr. Marable, "but seven months have passed, and we would surely have heard from him in that time, whether he had been picked up or had made his escape."

"She would make but a poor soldier, I fear, Colonel Hillhouse," replied Bertha, "despite your encomiums; for, returned home, her martial ardor all forsook her, and falling into her mother's arms, she—fainted."

"I am glad to hear it," he answered, "for such a *finale* to her unwonted exploits is in perfect harmony with my conception of her character. There was another on the field to-day of whom I would like to learn something," he continued, addressing this time Mr. Marable. "I have seen him before: first at Chickamauga, and again at Missionary Ridge; and in both these conflicts, as to-day, I knew him by a white plume which he wore in his hat. He has come to be quite well known in our army, and that, too, as a most gallant man."

"You will not see the white plume again in battle for some time to come," said Mrs. Marable, "for its wearer is the officer who lies wounded in the other room."

"I thought it was so," continued Hillhouse. "I don't know why, but I suspected, only since I learned that Colonel Macdermot was here wounded, that he and the white-plumed knight were one and the same. He is a brave soldier, Mrs. Marable, and I hope you will give me the pleasure of an introduction to him before my departure."

"I will take you to see him in the morning," she replied, "if his condition will admit of his seeing any one."

"Where is Miss Flora at present, colonel?" asked Bertha.

"She was at Winchester, Virginia, when I last heard from her, where she is again at her old work. She went last November from Washington City to my father's country-seat, on Long Island. After her arrival there she had quite a long and severe illness, the result, I think, as much of the mental suffering she had endured, as of exposure to the impure atmosphere of the hospital. She recovered slowly, so slowly that I feared for a while she would never recover. She returned to Virginia about two months since. In her last letter to me she affirmed that her health was wholly restored."

"I am glad to hear that it is," said Mrs. Marable. "And now, Colonel Hillhouse, I would be glad if you would, in your next letter to her, give her an invitation from me to visit us at Innisfel. Tell her that I have learned to love her as a daughter."

tico. Bertha gave him her hand at parting. As he took it, he said,—

"I am satisfied now, Miss Bertha, that you are a generous foe." Then lowering his voice, he continued: "You say that you love Flora; you will love her more when you come to know her personally. If she fails to visit you sooner, shall I bring her to see you when this war is at an end?"

"Oh, yes; bring her by all means. We all feel as if she were one of us. And we will be glad, too, to see you then, colonel; that is, if our country has gained her independence."

"Then I am afraid I will not be welcomed. Good-by."

"Good-by; and may overwhelming defeat meet you ere you reach Atlanta!"

"That is impossible—unless, indeed, Miss Bertha Marable, mounted as she was yesterday, will lead the Confederate line."

Again touching his hat to her, he passed out through the gate, and mounting his horse, was soon galloping after his regiment, which had just passed from sight.

with each other.' I saw and heard them, too, but the sight of my father's grief, and the great effort he made to master it, awed me, and I followed him silently."

She bowed her head upon her knees, making no effort to restrain the tears that were now freely yet silently flowing. The eyes of the soldier filled, too, as he thought of his lost friends and looked upon the sister's grief. At length, when Bertha had grown calm, she looked up and said,—

"Since my brothers first joined the army I have never been able to look upon anything belonging to them without being affected by the sight; and *now* these things affect me much more,—so much, sometimes, it is impossible for me to control my emotion."

"It is perfectly natural that they should affect you so," replied Kennon. "I remember once that, on a visit to Athens, made a year after I left there, I wandered into one of the recitation-rooms. We always took our seats in the recitation-rooms in alphabetical order. Paul Marable was therefore on my left and Alec Moran on my right. To revive *auld lang syne* as much as possible, I sat down in the same seat I had occupied while in college. I remember with what suddenness and distinctness I was transported back to the old days, and involuntarily I uttered Paul's name, and looked around, half expecting to see my classmates pouring through the door, as of old."

"Was the feeling a pleasant one?"

"Yes; if there is such a thing as a melancholy pleasure."

"Your mentioning Captain Moran," said Bertha, after a short pause, "puts me in mind to tell you some news of him which I do not suppose you have heard. It is that he and Miss Laura Mundy are married. He passed through Rome with her about two months since, on the way to his father's."

"I had not heard of it," replied Kennon. "I knew Miss Laura while at college, and as a *quasi* sweetheart of Julian's. I afterwards heard that she and Moran were engaged to be married, and then, about six months ago, I heard that their engagement was broken. At the same time I learned this, I was told of another love-affair of his which will interest you. It was that during his stay in Augusta last autumn he met with Miss Annabel Winter, as she is called there, fell in love with her, and addressed her."

them all back in the chair as at first. She then took my hand and we walked silently away into the flower-garden. After a while I saw Julian, with his gun on his shoulder, going toward the woods. He went slowly, and I thought—for I was some distance from him—with a moody expression on his face. In about twenty minutes he returned; I was at the back door when he came in. His face was still clouded, as when he went off.

“‘Your hunt was a short one to-day, brother,’ I said, as he came in.

“‘Yes; I’m in no mood for hunting. Where is Hattie?’

“‘I left her in the flower-garden.’

“He went on through the house to the flower-yard. I followed him as far as to the front door. Hattie was bending over a small rose-bush, having a little bunch of flowers in her hand, and talking to herself or the flowers, I don’t know which. As he came close to her, he called her name; she turned round quickly, evidently surprised to see him. She cast a searching glance at his face, and then a look of disappointment came into her own. They looked at each other silently for a moment, then Julian turned, as if to go away; but he stopped as he heard her ask,—

“‘What did you want of me, Julie?’

“Her voice trembled a little, and tears stood in her eyes; the cloud was gone from his brow in an instant.

“‘I only wanted to look at you, my child,’ he said, ‘to see how much you minded my rough words; and I was going away, thinking that you didn’t care much how I spoke to you.’

“‘Didn’t care, Julie,’ she answered, ‘when it has been all I could do to keep from crying ever since you said them? But I wouldn’t cry, because I heard you say once that you didn’t like to see girls cry for every little thing. Then I came out here, and have been getting these flowers for you.’

“‘These flowers for *me*, my darling? Give them to me; they are the sweetest flowers that were ever gathered. Now let your tears fall, Hattie, for don’t you see I am crying too?’

“As he took the flowers, he put his arm about her, and kissed her. And so the breach between them, if breach it might be called, was healed. Julian preserved the flowers;

isn't coming down the street right towards us, and in company with that blinking school-teacher !'

"I looked in the direction he was looking, and saw a young lady, with weak-looking eyes, and with a simper, walking confidently by the side of the offending Stubbins. I saw them turn a corner, and then, as I rode away, I saw Blivins in eager chase turning the same corner."

"Poor man ! I am so sorry for him," said Bertha, yet with a smile which spoke little of sorrow.

"You may save your sympathy," replied Macdermot ; "he is as happy as anybody else. In fact, he has the advantage of most men."

"How ?"

"Because there are times, and they happen not unfrequently, when he is perfectly happy,—which condition happens to but few other men, and to them but rarely."

"We can't always tell who is happy. But when is Mr. Blivins so ?"

"When he has found a listener."

After this, they got up and walked back slowly towards the house. They went slowly, for they had much to talk about ; they stopped often, sometimes to rest, and sometimes to admire some wild-flower by the wayside.

When, at last, they reached the house, Bertha found Rabie Duke, with her three-months-old baby, and her sister Mennie, awaiting her. This was their first visit to Innisfel since the birth of Rabie's baby, but Mrs. Marable and Bertha had been to see them, and so knew that the baby's name was Pauline.

"Give me the little beauty, mamma," said Bertha, not waiting to take off her hat. "How bright she looks, Rabie ! How does her papa like her name ?"

"He thinks it the very prettiest she could have. I received a letter from him the day before the Federals passed through Rome ; since then, you know, we've had no eastern mail. He is nearly crazy, I know, to see her."

"I'll take her into the other room and introduce her to Colonel Macdermot," said Bertha, leaving the room as she spoke.

"Here, Colonel Macdermot," she said, as she entered the parlor, "is a little lady I have brought in to make your ac-

it was when he was at home on furlough the first time. He met Rabie and myself in Rome one day, and walked home with us. I did not then suspect him of being interested in me, but, after he went away, I caught myself thinking of him sometimes. But when Rabie tried to tease me about him, and I recalled certain things he had said to me, I thought that perhaps he might be interested in me. So, when I saw him again, and saw that he had put himself to some trouble to see me, who will blame me if I did take some pains to make my person more attractive, and to show that I was pleased with his company?"

"Not I, Mennie, for I know you did nothing that a woman might not do."

"Thank you, Bertha. But after he went away, and I saw, or thought I saw, that he felt in me more than a passing interest, I was afraid I had done wrong to encourage him; because, thought I, perhaps he does not know all in my past, and knowing that his opinion of me might change. So, after a hard struggle, I made up my mind to let him know all. It was a year before I again saw him. He and Paul happened to be at home at the same time. I talked to Paul about it; he told me that I was doing right, and promised to tell Mr. Colbert everything. I could safely leave it with Paul, for I felt sure that he would spare my modesty, yet not at the sacrifice of truth. This revelation caused no change in Mr. Colbert's manner towards me. Well, though I know now that he loved me, for he had told me so, yet he never asked for my love, nor spoke to me of marriage, until about a month ago. It was on the evening of the day the fight at Armuchee Creek took place,—the fight you took part in. He told me how bravely you rode into it, and how it fired him and his men, making them charge the Federal cavalry. He had a flesh-wound in the arm, received in that charge, which I dressed for him, as well as I knew how. And then, after a while, he told me again of his love, and this time he asked for mine. I had given it to him long ago. He then placed this ring upon my finger, and asked me to be ready when he came again, which he hoped would be in two months, to become his wife."

"And you promised?"

"Yes; I could not help it."

with the high hope of some day winning her love,—of making her the mistress of his own home. He went away with brave hopes: his father was a man of wealth and influence, and he, himself, had gained honors at college, but he would not come to Bertha Marable offering only these fair prospects; he would come to her when he could come crowned with honors won in the battles of a nobler warfare,—in the sterner conflicts of actual life.

Kennon Macdermot therefore hid away this love in his heart; hid it away until the time should come when he might declare it. The war came on; duty called him to the field; scenes of excitement, and such as try men's souls, crowded his daily life; so crowded it that, when a time of quiet came, a time of retrospection, the past—that past anterior to the war—already seemed a dim and shadowy land, and its events and personages vague and ill defined. But there was one who, at these times, coming from the past, came nearer, and yet more near, until she stood beside him in the present. In the quiet bivouac, while his wearied comrades slept beside their smouldering fires, or on the long march when he threw himself on the earth to rest, or in the lull of battle, it may be, when with his men he rested from the strife, the vision came to him, and he heard again the sweet voice of Bertha Marable, and saw again the bright glances of her eye.

And so the love that Macdermot had hidden in his heart grew stronger with the years. When at last he was stricken down at Bertha's side, and borne to Innisfel, to her home, there to be nursed to health, to have the daily ministrations of her he had so long loved, to hear indeed her voice, to look into her own blue eyes, and to feel sometimes the touch of her hand upon his, was it possible for him to still hide his love?

Bertha had never seen him absent-minded before that morning. She tried to talk to him, but he answered at random, and only in monosyllables. She did not laugh at him, nor think him dull, nor wonder at his silent mood on this the last of so many pleasant rambles. Perhaps she understood it,—for might not her own feelings be an index to his? And even as she walked beside him, still veiling—it was rather a poor attempt to veil—the deep feelings of her heart by commonplace utterances, she had a dim perception that she was nearing the end of a long and patient waiting.

CHAPTER XL.

VILLAINY TRIUMPHANT.

ON a certain morning in the latter part of December of the same year, Horace Winter sat alone in the office of his banking-house. The door opening on the street was closed, as was also the inner door opening into his private office. The door of his iron safe was standing wide open, while one of its drawers had been taken out and placed on the small table sitting in front of the grate. The man, as he sat there pale and haggard, was an object to be pitied. He got up with an uncertain step, and again began to search through the drawers and receptacles of the safe, taking out the contents of each, and examining them with care. Last of all he examined, and with more care than the rest, the few papers contained in the drawer lying upon the table. He placed them back, and, with a hopeless expression in his face, sat down to gaze into the fire.

But Horace Winter was not a man to yield wholly to despondency. Gradually his face lost its haggard expression, and the old, hard look came once more into his eyes.

"All is not lost yet," he muttered. "I have discovered the robbery sooner than the villains intended that I should. There is time enough to spoil their plan to get possession of my cotton. And, if they are not wary, those receipts will yet be the means of their capture. But they must be overtaken before they get out of the Confederacy."

At that instant he saw an envelope lying on the floor in front of the open door of the safe. He picked it up. It was directed to himself, and the handwriting, though long unused to it, he recognized with a start. Tearing it open with trembling hands, he read the short note it contained. It was as follows:

"'There are more things in heaven and earth, *Horatio*, than are dreamt of in thy philosophy.' But dreaming, I

of his hand. The bell was answered by his office-boy, who, receiving the papers just written, immediately went out. Now pushing his chair back from the table, the man again sat, with contracted brow, staring into the glowing grate. And again his thoughts found expression in words spoken in low and, at times, fierce tones.

"He went away years ago, abandoned his wife and child, and changed his name. It was better for his wife and child that he went away, and I was flattering myself that I too was rid of him. But soon came that letter from Richmond asking me to go on his bond to keep him out of jail,—asking *me*, whom he had threatened to ruin. Then came the notice of his death. But I was not yet rid of him; he must live to carry out his threat. I believed the story. Then, for some reason,—I hardly know what, except that he was a bright boy,—I took some interest in Ned, who has turned upon me like the snake in the fable. The ingrate! Surplus funds, indeed! They have left me nothing. And yet what a fool I was to walk into their trap, to play and drink with such villains! Ha! that wine was surely drugged. I remember now the drowsy feeling I had after that last glass—and this throbbing ache in my head—I understand it now. The notes of hand and the cotton receipts they can hardly make available; but the gold and the Confederate money—almost worthless though the latter is—I could ill afford to lose at this time, when my creditors, especially Houghton, are beginning to press their claims. And when they know of my losses they will be more importunate than ever. I must sell some of my real estate, which must be to sacrifice it, or—*I must bring about this marriage*. Why not? Is he not rich? What more need she ask? She *must* do it—I am already pledged to it; and it has now become a necessity. When I spoke to her about it before, she was silent, and I saw rebellion in her eyes,—in both her's and her mother's. They will resist, but I am determined that they shall yield!"

He got up, and filling a small glass from a bottle which sat upon the mantelpiece, he drank it off. "Damnation!" he muttered, as he put back the glass, "am I to be always thwarted and crossed in my own house?"

Poor man! how far he had wandered from the path of true manhood! He had tried, for a brief space in early life, to walk

effect, however, was to harden it, for he had not the manhood to relent.

"Don't be silly," he said, with a contemptuous wave of the hand. "I am in no mood to listen to sentiment. You understand me;—I mean what I say."

Horace Winter had mistaken the spirit of his daughter. She rose up; her eyes were no longer pleading. If he had taken the trouble to look into her face, he would have seen that it was calmly resolute. So, also, was her mother's,—resolute to stand by her child, and, as far as she was able, to shield her from any and every evil. Mother and daughter silently left the room together. They did not turn back to utter words of reproach or strife, but they went forth determined that this hated marriage should not be consummated.

not scruple to inject into the young girl's mind the cruel thought that one result of her present opposition to her father's wishes would be to shorten his life. It was certainly embittering it now, but she might have to repent a wrong much more grievous, urged this man of guile, a wrong done to him which no sighs could ever atone for, no tears could ever wash from her memory; for such was the nature of his disease, he explained, that any violent emotion, especially if it should be protracted, might bring on a spasm from which he could not hope to recover. He paused a moment to mark the effect of his words; he could see by the dim light that came through the stained windows that she was very pale, and that she kept her eyes still upon the floor. Was she beginning to yield? or was she praying for strength to stand in the coming ordeal?

The crafty speaker changed now his subject, and with it his tone. He spoke of Houghton; spoke confidently and cheerily. With an air of candor he spoke of his faults: he would not deny that Mr. Houghton had faults, had been guilty of some indiscretions, perhaps of some excesses; but what young man of spirit was spotless? As for Mr. Houghton, he knew him to have a kind heart, a generous disposition; and that he believed a great change had taken place in his character during the last few months. As evidence of this he saw him associating with the moral and pious, and a constant attendant upon religious services.

At this moment the sexton, accompanied by his wife, came forward. Annabel started when she first became aware that others were approaching, but seeing who they were she seemed to feel some relief from their presence. They came forward and spoke to her, after which the sexton proceeded to light up the building, while his wife sat down in one of the front pews.

Annabel had not seen this old man and his wife until they were within a few feet of her. They had come, apparently, from some hidden recess of the chapel. So likewise must have come the figure, but a few feet off, that the first rays of the gas-light flashing through the room revealed to her startled vision. She started to her feet with a low cry of alarm, and would have fled had not the presence of her father at her side restrained her. The cloud on Houghton's brow darkened at this manifestation of her fear and dislike of him. He made an attempt, however, to conceal the resentment he felt.

The cruelty and injustice she was made to endure awoke a spirit in her breast that made her speak out bravely, if not wisely :

"I know that I am now defenceless,—a weak girl with none to take my part. But it will not be always so, for there is one—a gray-haired man, my father once—who, if he knew how I am treated now, would come with all the haste he could to take me away. And he *will* come, and he will be able, too, to protect me." Her eyes were turned towards Houghton as she ended, showing that she was regarding him as the one against whom she needed protection.

The only effect of her words was to increase the anger of her father, and to confirm him in his cruel course. There was now no shadow of relenting in his heart. One effect of her words upon Houghton was to put him in mind to take a petty revenge.

"The old man Marable still lives, it is true," he said, with a diabolical sneer upon his face, "but he is far away, rather too distant is he to help you, Miss Winter, in the present emergency. And as for those sons of his, who were always meddling with other people's affairs, I am glad to be able to state—perhaps Miss Winter has forgotten it—that they are both sleeping that long, cold sleep from which no cry of hers can ever awaken them."

"It is false!" shouted a voice that came apparently from above the pulpit; and the next instant Julian Marable leaped the balustrade in front of the altar. As he touched the floor, and before the astonished group had time to recover from their surprise, he uttered, with a distinct voice, the once familiar name,—

"Hattie!"

With a ringing cry of joy the girl sprang towards her deliverer,—sprang past the already shrinking person of Houghton, and past the tottering form of her father, and fell unconscious into the arms that were outstretched to receive her. The next instant two women passed hurriedly down the steps of the pulpit to the side of Julian. The latter, now transferring Hattie to the care of her mother and Chaffey Phipps, turned towards her persecutors.

"How dare you, sir—" began Horace Winter, in a threatening tone; but ceasing suddenly, with an expression

"I can, major, and am ready to go with you in the boat. I've followed you into danger before to-day."

"Come, men," said Julian, turning to the bystanders, "give us a lift."

A dozen hands seized the skiff and lowered it into the water.

"We need one more man," said Julian, looking around upon the crowd. "Who will he be?"

No answer followed this appeal.

"How is this, Jack?" said the corpulent man, looking at the sailor.

"It's like running your ship square on the reefs, with no life-preserver on board. I can't swim," he answered.

"We will have to go alone, Major Marable," said the man Perkins, stepping into the boat as he spoke.

"*Marable?*" said the sailor, in an eager tone. "Did you say Major *Marable*? Then I'm your third man, as sure as my name is Ben Goodson." He showed his readiness to encounter the danger by instantly jumping into the boat. Julian followed quickly, taking the steersman's seat. They pushed off at once up the stream, it being desirable to meet the descending house as far above the dangerous piers as possible. They made little progress, however, against the swift current, notwithstanding they kept close to the bank. Julian and the young sailor would like to have known something more of each other, but the business in hand absorbed all their attention.

In the mean time the house had come down quite rapidly. The man on the roof, who, when first seen, was reclining in an easy position, and appearing to look with indifference upon the scene, now rose up, and, going to that part of the roof overhanging the gable-window, where the woman and children were seen, got down upon his knees and leaned over, as if speaking to the woman. He was probably telling her that a boat was coming to her assistance, and giving her some directions that might facilitate her escape. This done, he rose up and stood leaning against an upright shaft which had once supported a vane. Though he stood there seemingly indifferent as to his fate, yet he had taken the precaution to strip himself of coat and shoes, the former of which was lying across the ridge of the roof at his feet.

needing rest, we stopped. Some time during the night the old man pegged out,—I don't know what was the matter with him. I was asleep at the time; and when, the next morning, I found how matters were, I would have gone on at once, but it was too late; the waters had made me a prisoner. The waters continued to rise all day; they forced us to the upper story. Near the middle of the night—last night—we floated off. This morning, early, I climbed out on the roof; not that I would be more secure here, but that I might hear no longer the thumping of the dead body against the walls of the lower room. Before leaving the woman, I pointed to the valise, and told her it contained papers and money belonging to Horace Winter, of Augusta. I told her, too, that I renounced all claim to it, and that, if she were rescued, to deliver it to its owner. And you heard me remind her of it just now when she was about to leave it. I mention these things as proof that I made, as far as I was able, restitution, and before it was forced upon me, for the woman knew nothing of the robbery. I do not expect to be brought to trial for this crime, yet I *may* be, and therefore I ask you to remember these things. The old man's death was strange. For the past year I have seen him, at times, start up in his sleep, and cry out to some one, calling her 'Sue Greggs.' That is the name of the woman in the boat with you. Why should he have gone to her house to die? Yesterday, after his death, I learned, for the first time, what Brenham was to me,—that I owed my existence to my accomplice in crime. And then, last night, with its long, dark hours, with the roar of the waters without, and that muffled thump, thump, thump, in the room below,—may its memory perish forever!—was more than I, devil that I am, could bear."

He paused; drew to him his coat, and took from one of its pockets a large flask. He then stood up, and with one hand resting on the vane, and holding the flask in the other, he continued,—

"My life was wrecked long ago, Julian Marable; and this"—stretching out the hand that held the flask—"is what wrecked it. A thousand curses be upon the man who first put the bottle to my lips!"

As he said this, he drained the flask of its contents, and then threw it from him into the water. By this time the

his head, with his white face turned upward, is bent back, as he lies with his neck across one of the timbers of the raft. Lying thus, his soulless body is borne by the conquering river away from the sight of men.

As his body passed from view, Julian turned the prow of the skiff towards the bank.

Savannah River,—exactly how fur it is from here, I don't know ; some forty-five or fifty miles, I guess. It was day before yesterday, and nigh on to dark it was, when two men, an old one and a young one, come to my house, and ast to stay all night. They come in wet, for it had been rainin' all day,—yes, and fur a week befo' that. They was well dressed, and the youngest of 'em had in his hand that same carpet-bag that you see there. They didn't wait fur an answer, but came right in. I noticed that the old man looked broke-like, and I arose and sat a chair fur him. The other seemed forward. 'Come, my good woman,' says he, 'you must give us supper and lodgin' to-night ; we'll pay you well fur it.' Bein' but a poor woman, with them two young ones there to feed, and with no one to help me since my po' man was killed at Chancellorsville, I thought 'twas a God-send, and so I told 'em they was welcome if they could put up with the fare. Saying they would do that, I went to work to get supper fur 'em.

"The old man, I noticed, didn't eat much,—nothing, I may say,—but drunk somethin' from a bottle he carried in his pocket. After supper, when I showed 'em where they wus to sleep, the old man said 'no ;' says he, 'Make me a pallit down here, before the fire.' So I spread one down there fur him, but the young man went up in the loft.

"Well, some time after I had been asleep—I don't know how long—I heard somebody call my name. It woke me up. I listened, and derrectly I heard it again ; it came clear and loud, yet sorter skeered-like. I knowed then that it come from the man on the pallit. Thinkin' he was sick, I went to him. I first throwed mo' pine knots on the fire, and then ast him what he wanted. He didn't speak, and was breathin' very loud and hard. I waited a minute for the fire to blaze up, and then I saw that his face wus very white, and wus workin' as if he wus in pain. I spoke to him again, and he didn't answer. I spoke louder, and he opened his eyes with a start, and ast me what I wanted. I told him that he'd called me, and I had come to see what he wanted. He said that he never called me. I told him that I heard him speak my name three times as plain as I ever heard it in my life. Says he, 'Woman, you were dreamin',—I don't know your name. What is your name?' 'My name is Sue Gregg,' says I. He turned away his face from me with a great

which I knew, and was thankful enough to get back. He also gave me a roll of Confederate bills, drawin' 'em from his pocket with some trouble, saying, as he done so, 'They're most worthless now, but they're all I have exceptin' what he (and he motioned his hand above) has, and it's useless to try to get it from him.'

"He lay very quiet after this, as though he had fallen into a sleep. I watched him so a half-hour or more, when he started up, his eyes wide and starin', and graspin' out at somethin' with his hands; but he fell back a'most as soon as he rose up. I bent over him, fur I thought he was tryin' to say something. I only heard him say, 'Tell him, him up-stairs, to keep away from Augusty—from the river. The bridges——' I heard no mo', for he could say no mo',—he was dead."

The woman paused in her story; paused as if to take breath and to collect her scattered thoughts. Julian encouraged her with a nod, and, after a while, said,—

"Now tell us, Mrs. Gregg, in as few words as you can, what passed between yourself and the young man, especially that in reference to the contents of the valise he had with him."

"Yes, sir. It was late the next mornin' when he came down. As soon as he looked at the man lyin' on the pallet he knew what had happened. He turned a little pale, but I thought looked ruther pleased than grieved. 'So the old man did drop off, did he?' he said, in a light way. 'He has crossed the dismal river by this time, has gone the way of all the earth. Here is money to have him buried. You will please attend to it. I must be off as soon as I get my breakfast.' Says I to him, 'Do you know who the man is?' He turned on me with a wicked smile. 'Well, my good woman,' he says, 'I've had some knowledge of the individual you speak of.' 'At any rate,' I answered, 'he made me promise to tell you that his name is Charles Winter, and that he was your father. It's a strange message, sir,' said I, seein' him turn pale and stagger back at my words, 'but I promised to deliver it.' He made no answer, but hurried through his breakfast, eatin' hardly anything; then gettin' his valise, he went to the door. He threw it open, but stopped. The water rippled over the door-sill, and come into the room. I went to the door and looked out; as far as I could see wus

side. I was layin' down between my two children, with a arm around each, expectin' every minute when the house would go to pieces. After it got into the current it rolled a good deal, and then we heard a noise in the room below like a heavy body strikin against the weather-boardin'. The gentleman spoke then fur the first time, and only time durin' the night: 'Mrs. Greggs,' says he, 'what's that noise below?' 'It's the dead man, I reckon,' I answered. We said no mo'. All night long we heard that dull, heavy thump below, and I tell ye it was dreadful to hear.

"When the day broke at last it brought some hope to me of gettin' off, bein' as the house still held together. When it was light good I saw that the young man was very white, and lookin' much older than when he first came. He come to me holdin' that black valise" (pointing as she spoke to the one in front of Julian) "in his hand. 'Mrs. Greggs,' says he, there's money an' papers in this valise belongin' to Mr. Horace Winter, of Augusty. If you are taken off the house, take the valise with you, and give it into Mr. Winter's own hands. There's a reward offered fur it, which you will doubtless get. It's stolen property, so be sure to do as I say. The chances are, Mrs. Greggs, that we'll all go to the bottom together, yet you *may* be taken off; as fur me, I intend to stick to the house.' After that he got through the window, an', by good climbin', got up on the roof. I saw no more of him till I was taken out of the house by the brave young gentleman there that brought me here. He can tell you better than me what become of him, and how he got me and my children and the valise out of the house."

The eyes of all turned upon Julian as the woman ceased speaking, as if expecting him to continue the story.

"I am to understand then, Mr. Marable," said Horace Winter, "that it is to you I am indebted for the recovery of my property?"

"I am glad that it was in my power to assist in its recovery," answered Julian, "and, if you will hear me, I will now tell, as briefly as I can, the particulars of its rescue and the fate of Ned Winter."

"I will be glad to hear what you have to say."

Horace Winter spoke this not as he would have spoken it when Julian Marable first entered the room. There was some

all that duty requires of me in this case when I deliver this valise into your hands."

"Stop, Major Marable," said the sick man, speaking with more animation than he had yet used. "I feel as if I owe you an apology for my incivility when you entered the room. Will you forget it?"

"It is forgotten already, sir," answered Julian.

"You can then be generous as well as brave. I now feel free to ask your further assistance in this matter."

"I will gladly serve you in any way that I can," replied Julian.

"I will ask you first to examine the contents of the valise, and give me a list of them."

When this had been done, and the list read to the sick man, he said,—

"The restitution is complete. And now, Major Marable, I will ask you to pay to this woman the reward I offered for the recovery of this property. And then, that you will satisfy the claims which Mr. Houghton holds against me."

Julian cheerfully consented to perform these offices. After receiving more minute instructions in regard to the latter, he left the room, accompanied by Mrs. Winter. Mrs. Greggs had, before this, returned to the dining-room, where her children had been left. Julian at once paid to this poor woman the large reward which had been promised. In addition to this, a purse was made up for her among the citizens of the place, her strange story having become well known in a few hours. And so this poor woman, so lately threatened with dire ruin, was made to go on her way rejoicing.

On inquiring for Rich Houghton, Julian learned that he had left the city. He found his attorney, however, who had instructions to press the claims of his client to an immediate settlement. These were quickly settled.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

JULIAN, having disposed of the business entrusted to him by Horace Winter, was again on his way to Travis Square. Nothing remained now for him to do but to acquaint Mr. Winter with the settlement which he had effected with the attorney of Mr. Rich Houghton.

He had not yet been able to have an interview with Hattie. He would not leave Travis Square again, he thought, until after this interview.

As he walked along the street, he came up unexpectedly with the young sailor who had come so opportunely to his help the day before on the river. Ben Goodson had accompanied Julian and the rescued party from the river-bank to Mr. Winter's residence. During this walk Julian learned who the sailor boy was, and the latter heard, with much grief, of the death of his benefactor, Paul Marable.

Ben had been seeking Major Marable all day; he wished to tell him of his intention to enlist in his regiment, and to ask him to go with him, as soon as he could, to the enrolling-office in Augusta, that the matter might be arranged at once. Julian promised him that he would attend to it the next morning.

Then, as they went on together, Ben told how he had, the day before, learned who his father and mother were, and when and how they had died. He said,—

“On leaving you yesterday, I steered my way along a narrow street which took me down to the river. On the corner of Travis Square, and on the river's bank, there is a small house; a battered old hull she is, with her doors broken down, her lights knocked out, and lookin' as if no one had sailed in her for years. I went in. There was a back door through which I could look out upon the river. While standing there, and lookin' out through this port-hole, I felt as if I had sailed

in that sea before, and a mem'ry that had been with me always, the mem'ry of a tall woman, with big black eyes, came back to me. While lyin' there at anchor, thinkin' of the old time, I heard a sound on my larboard, which made me port helm. Before me was a tall craft, rigged in black. We stood a minute lookin' at each other before either hailed.

"Your name, young man?" came at last from the strange craft. I let her know that Ben Goodson was the name under which I was sailing.

"Your father's name?" she next sung out.

"It's not in the log-book," I shouted back.

"She then wanted to know at what port I had taken on the name of Goodson. 'It was given to me,' I told her, 'by that man who had the best right of any livin' man to give it to me; by him who had steered my founderin' boat into smooth waters; by Captain' (he is captain to me and always will be) 'by Captain Paul Marable.'

"Paul Marable!" she shrieked. "I ken him weel."

"Well, sir, not to spin too long a yarn, it turned out that I was in the house where I was born, and had lived until stolen away, and that the old woman before me, whose name is Chaffey Phipps, was my mother's aunt, and was the same that I remembered to have come there once when I was a child. She then told me how she was the last that was left to me of my folks. We then spoke of the name which he, Captain Paul Marable, had given me, and she advised me to keep it; for she said my father had not done well, and had changed his name before he died. I feel free to speak to you of him as I've done, knowin' that you knew him. So we agreed that I should keep the name. Then we talked of what I was to do. I had been on board a gunboat on the coast, but there bein' now no navy for me to enter, I must go into the army. It was soon settled that I should enlist in your regiment."

"I will be glad to have you, Ben," said Julian; "glad to have so brave a man as you have shown yourself to be, in my regiment."

By this time they reached a small gate opening into a quiet yard, at the back part of which a small house could be seen through the trees. Julian knew that it was here old Chaffey had her abode. After telling Ben where to meet him the next morning, and at what hour, he went on to Travis Square,

while the other entered the yard, and soon after disappeared within the sombre-looking tenement.

When Julian entered the chamber of the sick man that afternoon he could not but feel that the few words of friendly greeting spoken by Mr. Winter were genuine. The same impression was produced by them upon both Mrs. Winter and Annabel, who were present.

As soon as Horace Winter was informed by Julian's statements that he was no longer a debtor to Rich Houghton, a gleam of satisfaction lit up his before-languid eyes, and he muttered,—

"I am free, then, from that scoundrel. And it is to you, Major Marable, that I am chiefly indebted for my freedom."

As Julian made no answer, he went on,—

"I wish to send through you, Major Marable, as I may have no other opportunity, an apology to your father for my churlishness on the occasion of his bringing my daughter home. Tell him that I now know that he had forgotten our old enmity, that he was too true and brave a man to have remembered it so long. Tell him that I thank him for all that he did for Annabel."

Julian assured him that he would deliver these messages; after which, for a little while, no one spoke.

The sick man, propped up by pillows, was gazing thoughtfully through a half-opened window. The fierce light faded from his eyes, and a softer expression than any it had long worn gradually settled upon his face. This Prodigal Son had wandered very far away from his Father's house, and he had been long a wanderer. During all these years he had fed upon husks—swine's food. He was a self-willed Prodigal; he would have naught but that which he desired; would do only that which pleased him; would go only where his fancy led him. So choosing his own way, he walked therein with a proud and resolute spirit. His *was* a resolute spirit, and so he wandered far and long. Closing his heart against the many gentle influences that called him back, he went ruthlessly on. It is true, he fed upon husks, but then he was free. Ah, yes! he was free to become unjust and selfish, free to tyrannize over his wife and child, and even free to sit as Moloch on the altar of his household. But though he closed his ears resolutely against all sounds save the whisperings of his own fierce spirit,

yet there were times when there seemed to come, as if floating from the long abandoned homestead, some faint cry of warning, or of entreaty to return, which, penetrating into his soul, would shake its fancied ease. Would the starving wanderer never come to himself?

Through all these years this man was dying of starvation. Did God care that he should perish? Had He not spoken to him all along through the love and devotion of his wife? Yea, and he heard the voice, but he answered only by hardening his heart. Then his lost child was restored to him; and, gentle and beautiful, she came hastening to give him her heart's fresh love. But she had been brought by an old enemy, and more than this to him, she had been raised by him, and raised—so his aroused pride and warped imagination put it—to hate such as he had now become. And so his shrivelled soul closed upon itself, and so his innocent child first came to know the heartache.

But God's ways are far above man's ways. The events of the last few days had been of such a character as to make him pause. They were of such a character as to let him see himself just as he was, and those about him just as they were. His perception was not now vague; it was clear and piercing. When he saw himself a petty tyrant, there was no longer another self to straightway make excuses for him; but, in full and unclouded vision of all his past life, he stood condemned by himself as a mean and unjust man. This vision had not come suddenly; it had only just now attained to full and resistless lucidness. The wanderer had come to himself.

He lay gazing fixedly out through the window, yet his eyes were turned within. He was looking back, with a mixed feeling of loathing and relief, at that old life of his. Yes, there was, hardly perceptible it may have been, something of a relief that came to him, for he seemed to himself to be emerging from the mouth of a dark and tortuous cavern,—as if the old life already lay behind him.

Mrs. Winter, noticing the long, fixed look, passed quietly to the head of the bed, and bending over him tenderly, asked,—

“Can I do anything for you, Mr. Winter?”

“Do anything for me?” he repeated, taking one of her

hands in his. "Yes; sit here beside me, and let me hold this hand a little while and think of the time when I loved to hold it thus. The memory of those days has been long absent from me, Ruth. It were mockery to ask your forgiveness, yet I know that I have it."

He would have gone on accusing himself, for he was in no mood to hold back anything now, but his great emotion checked him. Nor could Mrs. Winter answer him; in her great joy she could only bow her head upon the pillow and weep.

Julian, thinking that he had no right to witness this scene, withdrew and repaired to the drawing-room, determined to wait there until he should see Annabel.

As soon as Horace Winter could speak, he called his daughter to his bedside.

"Annabel," he said, "you too will forgive me, I know, but I can never forgive myself the harshness and cruelty I have exercised towards you. Oh! my poor child, why do you not hate me?"

In an instant the much-wronged daughter was at her mother's side, and, like her, was weeping.

The man had much to confess; his story was a dark one, yet there were some gleams of light in it, for it showed that he had not yielded without a struggle. And after his fall, when he seemed to be led captive at the will of an evil power, even then there were times when he would secretly yearn for that sympathy which his coldness had repelled, had put away from him forever, as he thought, for he felt himself incapable of ever seeking it.

The joy of the wife and daughter on this occasion was similar to that experienced by those who welcome back a loved one after a long absence; it was similar, yet more poignant. The confession of the wife was shorter: she had blamed herself for her husband's coldness; she would try to be to him a better wife, more gentle, patient, and watchful. She was afraid that she had often failed in her duty. But he put his hand upon her mouth and stopped her.

"No, no, Ruth; not once, never!" he said. "But tell me, my wife,—for I may call you so now,—how it was that you were always so gentle and patient with me? What was it that enabled you to endure my cruel conduct; enabled you to

return only good for so much evil? It is *this* that I cannot understand."

Yes, this had always perplexed him, and had often chafed him; he had even wished, at times, that she would return his evil with evil. She did not answer his question directly, but presently, when she spoke in low tones of Him who had come from heaven to earth to teach men how to live; how they might live free from impatience, selfishness, and unkindness; who had come to be a personal Friend to all who sought his friendship; when she spoke of Him as renewing daily her hope and her strength, he knew of whom she was speaking. He was beginning now to understand that which so long perplexed him.

For some minutes after his wife ceased speaking, he lay very quietly with his eyes half closed, and having her hand still clasped in his.

"Yes, you have been with Him, Ruth; you have learned of Him, you and Annabel, our child. Perhaps it is not too late for *me* to learn of Him, and my wife and daughter will lead me to Him."

And so were praying that wife and daughter, with their heads bowed upon his couch. When they rose up, the weary man had fallen asleep, and on his pale face there was a look of rest,—a rest as only might come after a lifetime of weariness.

CHAPTER XLV.

JULIAN'S STORY.

HATTIE—we will call her by her old name henceforth—knew that Julian was waiting for her in the drawing-room. She went at first to her own room, where she remained quite an hour. There was little change to be made in her toilet, but she had been weeping, and so she lingered until assured by her mirror that the traces of her tears had wellnigh disappeared.

Julian, who had been waiting very impatiently, met her at the door. He took her hand as she came in, and led her to a seat. Ah, how the touch of that hand thrilled him! And when he looked into those sweet brown eyes, what a host of cherished memories crowded upon his soul, making him stand there speechless! In the midst, however, of all the emotion called up by her presence, he noticed that her hand trembled slightly in his. He was not silent long.

"Oh, Hattie!" he said, in a low tone, "through how many long months have I looked forward to this hour! Not a day has passed but I have thought of you; not a day in all the two years and a half since we parted at Innisfel, but I have thought of you."

"And I have thought of you, too, Julie,—all the time." She said this timidly, letting her eyes fall before his burning gaze.

"But my time of trial is over at last," he continued; "and you are once more beside me. Hattie, after your last letter to me was received,—now more than eighteen months ago,—you know not what terrible things I have imagined. Do you remember what I once said to you in the cemetery at Athens,—that there would come to you some day those who would try to make you forget Julian Marable?"

"I do remember it. I could never forget that day."

"And I told you, too, that they would try to make you be-

lieve that I was wicked and an infidel, and would try in all ways to poison your mind against me."

"They told me these things, Julie, and more; they brought me a cruel paper that told of your death,—how there had been a collision at sea, and you alone were lost. But I could not believe it. That very night Tony came, bringing a letter from you, which told me to believe no ill news of you which might reach me. So I tried not to believe it."

"Who brought you this paper, Hattie?"

"Mr. Houghton. You stayed away so long, and hearing from you no more after the letter brought by Tony, I was beginning to fear the worst, to fear that that newspaper report might, after all, be true. Then, after a while, old Chaffey came; she had been in Augusta, I think, several months. The first thing she asked me was when I had heard from you. When I had told her all, she spoke so confidently of your return that all my fears were wellnigh dispelled. But months passed on, and you neither came nor wrote. And in those months they pressed me so hard! All the world, except mamma and old Chaffey, seemed to have turned against me. But you came at last—came in time to save me from that wicked man. Not from being his wife, Julie, for I was ready to dare all things, and suffer all things, sooner than that."

"I know it, Hattie."

"And you came, falsifying that cruel newspaper report. Now tell me, Julie, how such a report came to be published."

"I will, directly. The letter I sent you by Tony gave you some conception of my feelings, of my uneasiness on your account, but it did not express the half of what I felt. You will understand them better when you know that old Chaffey's presence here is due to a letter I wrote her soon after the reception of your last."

"She never told me a word of this; but it explains much of her conduct. And this puts me in mind to ask another question, which I have been impatiently waiting to ask since you came back. How did you happen to come to the church so opportunely the other night? You see I am connecting old Chaffey with it."

"Your suspicion is well founded; you will see directly how well her lynx-eyes have kept watch over you."

Julian had already, in the letter brought by Tony, given

her an account of the visit of Malcolm Hillhouse to the hospital, of the latter's effort to obtain his release, of the hope engendered by it, and of his disappointment at its failure. After touching briefly upon these, he described his parting with Flora, and told of her determination to go in person to seek for the delayed papers. "Flora's last words to me," he continued, "revived, in some measure, my hopes——"

"Flora! Did you call her *Flora* when speaking to her?" asked Hattie, hesitatingly.

"I did not; I think I always addressed her as *Miss Flora*," replied Julian, casting a searching glance at the downcast eyes of his companion. He did not question her except by his eyes, nor did he make any further reply to her question. He resumed his story, but there was a brighter look in his eyes after the interruption.

"The same day that Miss Flora left for Washington I left the hospital. Notwithstanding the hope I indulged that her mission would prove successful, I had made up my mind to make my escape if possible. I watched in vain for an opportunity offering even the smallest probability of success while on the way to New York. And when, soon after arriving there, I was, with about a hundred other prisoners, placed in an open barge in tow of a propeller, I abandoned all hope of making my escape. All day the sky had been overcast by dense clouds; as night came on, these seemed to have settled upon the waters. About twenty minutes after our leaving the wharf, suddenly there loomed through the fog a large steamer bearing down upon us. In the next instant there was a terrible shock, prostrating violently all who were standing upon the deck of the barge, and precipitating into the water many of those who were standing near to its low gunwale. I was among those who were thrown overboard. My first thought on rising to the surface of the water was to make my escape. Surely, in the midst of such wild confusion, and aided by the fog, I might accomplish it. Pulling off my coat and shoes, and noting well the direction, I again sank out of sight. When I came again to the surface for air, I was thirty feet away from the barge. My vision was blurred by the fog, but I thought the barge sinking. The large steamer which had struck her had passed beyond, but was now stopped, as was also the propeller, and both were putting out their boats.

I took in but a few draughts of air, and once more disappeared; the fearful scene was shrouded from my eyes when I again came to the surface. I could no longer see it, but the cries of the terrified and struggling men, and the shouts of those who had come to their rescue, sounded fearfully near. I used every effort to increase the distance already between us. As I got farther away I became more calm. By degrees the sounds died away; and then, almost suddenly, black night came down upon me. As the last sound of a human voice died away, I raised myself half out of the water in my joy, tempted to give it vent in an exulting shout. But when another hour had passed, and I lay upon the restless bosom of the ocean, gazing up into a leaden sky, where no star appeared by which I might guide my course to land, the startling loneliness and utter helplessness of my condition came upon me with almost overpowering sense. I seemed to be the single occupant of a wide world—a lightless, voiceless world—stretched out beneath the pall of a black sky. I scanned my narrow horizon in vain to catch the glimmer of a lighthouse. The fear that I had drifted out to sea, and the thought that I might still be drifting farther away from the land, and if so, that I was momentarily diminishing the hope of seeing again in this life those whom I loved, came upon me, almost paralyzing my limbs. But I thought of her for whose sake I had so longed to be free, and these thoughts, driving away the base fears that had beset me, gave to me new strength, the strength to determine that I would relinquish hope only with my life.

“After some hours the moon arose behind the clouds, illuminating partially the scene. It gave me some relief, not only by its light, but more especially in giving me the points of the compass. For some time before this I had not dared to proceed in any direction, only exerting myself sufficiently to keep my head above the waves; but I now turned my head in a direction a little north of west, knowing that, if strength were given me to persevere in it, I would eventually reach the land. I went very slowly, for the tide was against me. Just before day-break, the clouds broke up and rolled away. At sunrise I was still proceeding in my westerly course, but without perceiving any indications of a neighboring shore. A little later, and I descried a sail on my right hand; it was bearing straight towards me. A new hope and then a new fear took possession

of me. I lay resting on my oars, so to speak, watching with intense interest the approaching vessel. I soon made it out an ocean steamer; and then, as it drew nearer, I recognized, with great joy, the British Union-Jack flying at its mast-head. It came directly towards me. I was seen; a boat was lowered, and in less than an hour after it first came in sight I was landed safely on its deck. It proved to be an English vessel on its way to the West Indies.

"The captain, after hearing my story, assigned me comfortable quarters. He put me on the sick-list for two days, that I might suffer no ill effects from my long bath.

"The vessel touching at Nassau, I there left it, as I knew that quite a brisk trade was carried on between that place and several of the Southern ports. Two or three days after my arrival in Nassau a vessel came from New York. In the papers which it brought I read an account of the collision of the steamer with the barge, which stated that its single victim was Major Julian Marable, of Georgia. It did not occur to me then that the papers containing this account might reach the South, and be copied into our Georgia papers. My only feeling in connection with it was one of exultation at my freedom; and my only thought was to get back to my own land—and to you.

"Being unknown and without money, I had to go to work. Three months passed before I was able to obtain passage in a boat destined for one of the blockaded ports of the Confederacy. Before we had been out two days a hurricane came upon us. The boat was wrecked, and I was left, with a portion of the crew, on one of the smallest islands of the Bahama group. It proved to be one seldom touched at by vessels; and so three more months passed before we could be taken off. The passing vessel reluctantly answered our signal. When she had received us on board we found that she was cleared for Kingston, Jamaica; that she was a week behind her time, and for this reason would not stop at Nassau to put us off. So we were forced to go on to Jamaica. At length, after weary months, I found myself once more in Nassau, seeking again passage to a Southern port in a blockade-runner. A few weeks later I was on a steamer bound for Wilmington, North Carolina. We succeeded in evading the blockading squadron; and so just six days ago, after an absence that

seems a lifetime in length, I set foot again on my native land. I took the first southward-bound train. My impatience began to increase the nearer I came to you,—yes, to *you*, for you seemed to be the end of my long wanderings. I imagined a thousand things—a thousand terrible things—that might have happened during the eighteen months—they seemed years—since Gettysburg. The train stopped, at length, on the bank of the Savannah; I got out and pushed through the uncertain crowd huddled together at the foot of the bridge, and fearing to cross it. I pushed through them and on to the bridge. I did not look to see if the stream was swollen to a mighty flood; I did not stop to listen if the timbers cracked beneath the mighty strain upon them; I saw only you,—I heard only you calling to me from the other bank.

“When I had passed over, and had made my way through the crowd which was gathered about the station house, I was met by old Chaffey Phipps. She clutched me by the arm with a nervous grasp. ‘Ye’re well met, Julian Marable,’ she said; ‘ye’re just in time. She has called you long, and she is calling you *now*; dinna’ ye hear her?’ Her words thrilled through me, for I knew that she was speaking of you. I questioned her, and she told me what was going on at the church. We hurried on. After guiding me in sight of the church she left me to bring your mother. I went on. Finding the front door locked, I passed to the rear and entered. Pausing in the shadow of a column to calm somewhat my excited passions and to take a survey of the situation, I heard Houghton’s cruel and cowardly speech. I then made my appearance, and—you know the rest.”

“Yes; that I was saved from him, and that you were restored to—to life.”

She sat gazing into the fire, a thoughtful expression resting upon her face. But Julian’s eyes were fixed upon her, and in them was a restless, eager look.

“Hattie,” said Julian, in a changed voice, and in a voice which made her start and look up at him, “do you remember once at Innisfel when, after I had started off to the woods with my gun, I came back, and, going to where you were in the flower-garden, you gave me some flowers?”

“I will never forget the time, Julie; for though you had

scolded me a little while before, yet you showed me that you—but go on.”

“Do you remember once, in the cemetery at Athens, while holding you by the hand, that I adjured you to let nothing ever come between us, and that your reply was, ‘No one, nothing—never?’ And do you remember how in all the happy years at Innisfel, while you were yet a child, I was ever best pleased when you were with me?”

“How could I know that, Julie?”

“No; you could not have known that, yet so it was. You thought of me as a brother, and believed that I loved you as a sister. But, oh, Hattie, another love was growing in my heart for you all those years! I did not know it then. I went away, and, though an ocean rolled between us, you still seemed near to me. Sometimes—yes, let me confess it—when I was about to plunge into some excess, or, it may be, while indulging in some excess, the loved faces of those I had left at Innisfel would rise before me, and by the loving, pleading glances which they turned upon me would smite my soul with remorse. At such times I often tried to banish those haunting faces; sometimes I failed to do so, and then, following the looks of their pleading eyes, I would forsake whatever company I was in and whatever forbidden pleasure I was pursuing. But not always did you look upon me then with sorrowing eyes, for you came to me at other times gazing full upon me with your own bright, happy eyes and your own sweet laugh ringing in my ears.

“I came back at length. The next five months were full of happiness, because I saw you daily. The war again called me away, and again you came to me as before. After more than a year's absence I was wounded and sent home. While lying on my couch, with you sitting beside me, and feeling the touch of your hand upon mine, or upon my brow as you ran your fingers through my hair, and listening to your low, sweet tones, I forgot my pain, and almost blessed the fortune which had sent me to you. One day after my convalescence, and just after a conversation I had had with Bertha, a new and strange thought seized me. It was suggested by something Bertha had said to me. I have sometimes thought since that she intended to suggest it. But it was very soon more than a thought; it became a conviction, an inspiration,

startling my soul with the presentation of a new hope, a hope that thrilled my heart and filled it with a wild yet timorous joy. I knew then, Hattie, for the first time, the nature of my love for you.

"But the time came for me to return to the army. You remember that, when I bade you good-by, I did not kiss you. You did not understand it, for you knew nothing of the love that was in my heart for you. I would not kiss you then because I thought it would be taking an unjust advantage of you; you had ceased to be my sister.

"Another year passed. In that year you were taken from us. You were permitted to write to me only two letters. Those letters revealed to me that a cruel danger threatened you. Soon after, Gettysburg, where Paul bade us all good-by, came, followed by what was to me a long, long night. When, at length, my strength began to return, and I thought of you, how defenceless you were, and how impotent I was to help you, I had wellnigh fallen a victim to the spirit of despondency that seized me; I would, perhaps, in my weakened condition, have fallen before it had it not been for the sustaining sympathy of Flora Blanchard. I told her all—everything—except what you were to me; but this, perhaps, she suspected from knowing the rest.

"And now, Hattie, you know all,—what you have been to me in the past and what you are to me now."

He paused as if expecting an answer.

"What do you want me to say, Julie?"

"Speak what is in your heart, Hattie."

"My heart is full of happiness, because you are with me, and because—of all you have told me," she answered.

"Then you *are* mine," he said, bending towards her eagerly, and speaking in a tone of almost fierce exultation; "then my long dream, if I am not dreaming now, is to be realized. But I am *not* dreaming; my long-lost Hattie is with me: she speaks to me as of old; I hold her hand in mine, and the thrill that I feel at its warm touch proves it a veritable hand; and I am looking into the same hazel eyes that I so loved to look into years ago at Innisfel, and I feel, as then, the spell of their dark witchcraft. Ah, Hattie! my darling, my child, tell me again that you are *mine*; show me your heart as you sometimes used to do when you were a child."

"You did not see *all* that was in it then, Julie, or you would now know what it is that fills it."

Julian was satisfied. The dream that had so long haunted the shadow-land of his life, and had given to its sombre clouds a silver lining, was realized, and its realization filled his heart. He seemed to be standing at the end of a long journey, and looking down upon a fair landscape. He saw then no cloud-shadows, no angry torrents, no rugged hills, only smiling fields, bright skies, and quiet waters. But a black cloud, that war-cloud which had so long darkened the land, began to rise, throwing its dark shadow across the scene. The vision fled before it, and Julian knew that he had been gazing upon a mirage.

The false vision fled, but Hattie was still with him; and knowing that *she* was his, he was satisfied.

He was about to break the short silence which had followed Hattie's last words, when Mrs. Winter came in. She reported that her husband was sleeping quietly, and that he appeared to be resting more easily than at any time before. She then asked Julian to make Travis Square his home during his further stay in Augusta. He accepted the proffered hospitality, but declared his intention of leaving for Innisfel on the morrow. The fact, which he had just learned, of his having been published in the Georgia papers as dead, determined him to go at once to those who doubtless were mourning for him as lost.

After tea, which was served to them in the dining-room, Mrs. Winter and Julian returned to the parlor, while Hattie went to her father's room. As she entered it he awoke. When he learned that Julian was still in the house, but would leave the next morning, he said,—

"I would like, Annabel, for you to send an invitation to his sister—or let it be to all the family—to make you a visit. Or, if you will do it, you can make them one. Major Marable will wait, no doubt, a few days that you may get ready."

"Oh, father, I would like so much to see them all! but I cannot think of leaving home *now*; not until I see you getting well will I think of it. But I will gladly send an invitation to them to come to us, and I think Bertha will accept it."

"I did not think you would go; and I am so selfish as to be glad that you will not. But, Annabel, much as I would like to have you near me, you must not stay with me this

evening; there is no necessity now for either you or your mother to stay with me the whole time. Leave a servant with me, so that I can send for you should I need your services. Return to your friend; and, if he would like to hear some music, play for him. It will not disturb me; in fact, I too will like to hear it,—which I can do if you leave the doors open.”

So Hattie, after calling a servant to wait in his room, kissed her father good-night, and went to rejoin her mother and Julian in the parlor.

The evening passed full of quiet happiness to these three. As Julian listened to some familiar and favorite air sung by Hattie he seemed transported to Innisfel, and to the days ere its family circle was broken. Years—very long years they seemed now, so full were they of strife, and pain, and sorrow—had passed since he had last heard these songs. He had reached at last, so it seemed, after perils on the land and on the deep, a green isle in a summer sea, and, while resting there, was listening to the refrain of the life that was past.

CHAPTER XLVI.

NEARING THE END.

ON the second day after leaving Augusta, Julian came to Innisfel. No notice of his approach having previously been received by the family as one back from the field, even the strong and inflexible father could refrain from a gleam of joy at again beholding beneath the old roof the lost son. And who may sound the depth of that joy and joy which, flowing in upon the mother's heart, again clasped in her arms her long-wandering boy, and ment blotted out soul and sense? Or who could restrain upon the fair face of the sister, radiant with smiles, and not have wept in sympathy with her?

How much there was to hear and to tell! With what interest did the others listen as Julian told of all that had fallen him after his departure from the hospital at Augusta. He told of his escape, of the night spent in the forest, of his voyage to the West Indies, of his fruitless efforts to return home, of his trials, labors, and impatient waiting, of his success with those efforts, and of his successful blockade at Wilmington. But it was with still greater interest that they heard him recount the events which had occurred in Augusta: of his meeting with old Charles, of the scene at the church, of the scene the next day on the river, of Ned Winter's death, of the change which had come to Horace Winter, and lastly of his interview with Julian. Julian kept back nothing. His mother and sister were the less pleased, because they had long ago suspected his feelings towards Hattie; nor was the father's pleasure less, for long how matters stood between his son and Hattie was brought to light by the fact that it took him wholly by surprise.

It was now Julian's turn to listen as the others told him all that had transpired there since he had last seen them. With deep interest he heard them tell of

Armuchee Creek, of the part his father and Bertha had taken in it, how Kennon was wounded and brought to Innisfel, and the events which occurred there the same evening. He heard with pleasure how Malcolm Hillhouse had appeared so opportunely upon the scene, and of his brave and generous conduct. He then learned with interest that Mennie Briggs, about a month before, had become the wife of John Colbert, and that his old sweetheart, Laura Mundy, was married to Alec Moran. It was not until he was alone with his mother that he learned of the engagement between Kennon and Bertha.

Julian remained at Innisfel two weeks, when he again left it to go to his regiment, now at Petersburg. Bertha, accepting Hattie's invitation, accompanied him as far as to Augusta.

Three days later Julian surprised what was left of his regiment by suddenly appearing among them. They were, at the time of his arrival, holding a part of the line to which the Federals had made a close approach, and which was under constant fire. But as soon as it became known to the men that Major Marable, whom they had long supposed to be dead, had rejoined them, forgetting the danger in their front, and losing sight, for the moment, of their weariness, they gave him welcome with three loud and hearty cheers. A few of the most reckless, leaving their hiding-places to shake hands with him, exposed themselves so far as to draw an extra volley of balls from the opposite line.

The war was drawing to a close. Lee's army, now reduced to twenty-five thousand men, and holding a line thirty miles in extent, could not hold out much longer. When a man fell in that attenuated line of Lee's—and they fell daily—there was no one to put in his place. It was a question of only a few weeks; any further attenuation of the Confederate line, and it must give way at the next push of the Federals. The few weeks came, and these entrenchments, so long the scene of an heroic defence, were abandoned. But it was impossible now for the Confederate chief to make good his retreat. Cut off from his supplies, and pressed on all sides by an active and overwhelming force, he was compelled to surrender. Of the eight thousand men who laid down their arms with him at Appomattox Court-House, were Julian Marable and Will Duke; and these two, with three others, one of whom was Ben Goodson, were all that were there to represent

the Marable Guards, who had come out a hundred strong four years before.

The Confederacy has fallen.

The Union stands intact.

May future generations, when they come to gaze upon the ruins of the former, see in them, what its defenders must always see, another landmark in Freedom's march !

And may the latter, bound together by chains far stronger than any that Might can forge, yet be, what its architects designed it to be, the home of the free !

CHAPTER XLVII.

CONCLUSION.

THE year 1865 was drawing to a close. Early in December an important event was to take place at Innisfel. It was the marriage of its beautiful daughter to Kennon Macdermot.

The appointed day came at length, bright and propitious, and bringing with it the invited guests. These were not numerous, but embraced friends of the family both in the neighborhood and in the city. Among the first to arrive were John Colbert and his lovely wife. Among those from Rome came Will Duke with Rabie and little Pauline, followed by Mr. Briggs and his family. And now a carriage drove up from which sprang a tall, soldierly-looking man, who assisted from the vehicle a lady dressed in black, and with an exuberance of dark hair. Julian, recognizing Flora Blanchard in the lady, immediately went out to welcome her. Then, turning to the tall stranger, he was rejoiced to see in him his old friend Malcolm Hillhouse. They were both cordially welcomed to Innisfel. Hardly more affectionate would have been the welcome Flora received had she been indeed a daughter and sister.

The hour having arrived, the ceremony which made Kennon Macdermot and Bertha Marable man and wife was duly performed. The evening passed full of enjoyment to all present.

There was a portrait hanging in the drawing-room, a life-sized portrait of a young man, which had been placed there but a few days before. It had been done by one of the best artists in the country. The soul of the artist had surely recognized the soul of him who looked at him from the daguerreotype he was copying. He had not only transferred to the canvas the golden shimmer of his hair, and his well-cut features, but looking out from those pure, brown eyes of his was

a holy light, speaking to those who looked into them of a high and noble life. There was a half smile, too, upon the face; it was an expression at once tender and half sad, for it was born of that love and sympathy which he felt for humanity. He who studied that face would say that it was the face of an enthusiast; but when he turned from it, it would be with a kindlier feeling in his heart for his fellow-men, and a higher hope for himself. And so the likeness of Paul Marable looked and smiled upon the happy groups that crowded the halls and parlors of Innisfel that night to celebrate the marriage of his sister with his old friend and competitor, Kennon Macdermot. And so, too, his spirit—to some there at least—seemed to mingle in the scene; especially did it seem thus to you, Julian and Flora and Mennie,—ye who were walking by the light which he let fall upon your ways.

On the Monday following Bertha's marriage a party of seven, consisting of the Marable family, which now included Macdermot, and their guests, Colonel Hillhouse and Flora, left Rome for Augusta, where they arrived about dusk the next evening.

After supper, Julian, taking Bertha with him, left the hotel at which they were stopping, and went in the direction of Travis Square. Before reaching it they turned from the sidewalk into a quiet yard, whose humble dwelling was set back from the street. On their reaching the door it was thrown suddenly open, and old Chaffey Phipps confronted them.

"So ye *have* come, just as I said ye would." With these words of welcome, she led the way into a room dimly lighted by a few embers on the hearth. When she had thrown on these a few sticks of wood she again confronted Bertha.

"And ye are wed now to Kennon Macdermot? Did I not ken it would be so the day I met ye together in the cemetery at Athens? Was it not plain, lassie though o' fifteen year she wair, that she had won the heart of Macdermot? And now, Miss Bertha, that ye may make the gude wife your mither has made before ye is the best fortune that old Chaffey Phipps can wish ye. Light, light, light," she went on, as the sticks she had put on the fire suddenly blazed up, "that is what we want in this world, and your mither has let hers shine. And she has been a light not only to them of her ain

house, but to her neighbors and to them that were afar off; even to me it came,—yes, shining through Paul, it fell even on my ain darkened way.”

Without waiting for Bertha to reply she turned toward Julian, saying, in a different tone,—

“Of course you did not know that *he* is in town?”

“No; how long has he been here?” asked Julian.

“About two weeks.”

“How does he pass his time?”

“In drinking himself mad. He passes this street every day, sometimes twice a day, riding a black beast of a horse that looks as if he too had taken his dram before starting.”

“He shows, then, that he has not forgotten the past?”

“And with Rich Houghton not to forget is not to forgive. There is no telling what the crazy loon might say or do, so I put the child on her guard, that she might avoid meeting him.”

“Othello’s occupation will soon be gone,” said Julian, rising up. “Day after to-morrow it will puzzle his addled brain to decide, I suppose, in what direction he will ride.”

They bade the old woman good-night, and, going out, went on to Travis Square. The clock was striking eight as they walked up its broad avenue; when they reached the door of their hotel, on their return, it was striking eleven.

The wedding which took place in Travis Square the next evening was, in accordance with the wishes of the parties most interested, a quiet one. Something of Horace Winter’s old pride had, at first, manifested itself in the desire to make of it a brilliant affair, but he yielded readily to the wishes of the others. About a score of friends from the city were present; among these was Mrs. Cora Lester.

Nothing occurred to interrupt for a moment the pleasures of the occasion. The bride was pronounced by all to be incomparably beautiful, and the face of the bridegroom, usually so imperturbable, relaxed its gravity, and wore an enviable air of satisfaction.

Before the wedding-party broke up that night Mrs. Winter asked some of them to return the next morning, at ten o’clock, to assist her in an entertainment she designed to give to the poor people of her neighborhood.

She had given a supper to her rich friends; she would now

give a dinner to her poor neighbors, for thus had she learned of Him who was the friend of both rich and poor.

The next day's sun rises in a cloudless sky. He comes in good time, yet he seems a laggard to many an expectant, half-fed urchin this morning. And after he comes he makes his way up the blue dome so very, very slowly. And not only the very young, but there are grown children who are watching the sun's ascent this morning with more than their usual interest.

The hour, eleven o'clock, comes at length. Ere ten minutes have passed the beautiful grove in Travis Square is alive with human beings. Moving among these people, speaking to them kindly, and showing them how they may pass the time pleasantly until dinner, and encouraging them to feel at home, is Mrs. Winter. Many of these poor people she knows personally, but they all know her. Blessings, sometimes expressed in words, and glances lighted with the devotion born of gratitude, accompany her wherever she goes. Hattie, too, has visited with her mother the most of them in their humble homes, and, like her mother, is known by all. Most of them know, too, of that scene which had occurred in the church close by, not quite a year ago; and so, having sympathized with her in her troubles, they sympathize with her now in her joy. Her strange story is familiar to them all; nor is their interest in it at all lessened by knowing that the tall, handsome man who walks beside her as her husband is the same who came so opportunely to her rescue in the church. But Mrs. Winter is assisted by others besides Hattie and Julian; among these is her husband, he who, a year ago, was a hard and selfish man, and would have looked upon the present scene with only disgust, but is now evidently mingling in it with pleasure.

The long dinner-table, spread in a broad and shaded walk on one side of the grounds, and which had been arranged under the supervision of Mrs. Marable, is now, at twelve o'clock, pronounced ready for the assembled guests. In a few moments these are arranged on either side, looking with eager, wondering eyes at the feast spread before them, and waiting the signal to begin their attack upon it. This given, they fall to in a manner which leaves no doubt in the mind of their hostess but that her bounty this time will receive full

justice. Some may show eagerness, but the great majority are quiet and well behaved, and all are certainly happier than they have been in many a day.

Mrs. Winter and her assisting friends, stationed at intervals on either side the table, see that all are cared for. In this work they are, perhaps, even happier than those they serve.

While all are thus engaged, a horse, whose rider seems to sit his seat unsteadily, passes at a sharp gallop along the street in front. He turns, still keeping the same quick pace, into the little-frequented lane close to which the table had been spread, and which led to the river. The rapid strokes of the horse's hoofs upon the flinty street make all look up; a dark face, haggard and with wild eyes, glares upon the scene for an instant, and the next disappears, going towards the river. The horse, a glossy black, with distended nostrils and fiery eyes, had much the look of his rider. So this vision of the mad horse and mad rider was a startling one, and one not easily to be got rid of. An expression of contempt tempered with pity passes across Julian's face as he looks up and recognizes the fleeting horseman. Many recognize him, but none speak of him, except perhaps in whispers, and then only to utter his name, for they prefer not to think of him at such a time as this.

At length all are satisfied, and now the remains of the feast are being distributed to the heads of families to be taken by them to their homes. While they are thus getting ready to depart, all are again startled by the sound of a rapidly approaching horse. The same horse and rider that so lately passed are coming back through the lane. Again the haggard face and wild eyes of the rider glare upon the faces that are turned towards him as he passes. This time he is not borne so quickly out of sight; but the eyes of all follow him as he flies along the narrow lane towards the broad street running in front of the square. As the horse reaches this street he is seen to whirl suddenly, and, with a wild bound, begin to traverse again the length of the lane. But the rider is no longer in his seat; he was seen to fall as the horse wheeled. The next instant he is seen dragged along the ground at the horse's heels. A cry of horror rises from the spectators, and a rush is made to the low palings which separate the grounds

from the lane. But the crowd pauses there; it is a rash act to get in the way of that black devil, charging so fiercely towards them. Yet there are two who do not pause,—not until they reach the middle of the road,—they are Philip Marable and his son.

Ah, Rich Houghton, you had many times before this cursed these Marables because they would interfere in other people's affairs, and now they are again standing athwart your way. But you know it not. Perhaps if you could have known how, at personal risk, they stopped the infuriated horse that was bearing you away, and with what gentleness they picked you up, and, bearing you within the enclosure, sought to restore you to consciousness,—if you could have known all this, and your heart were not all gall, a touch of shame or of remorse, falling upon your soul with quickening power, might have revealed to it a glimpse—a momentary, and like a far-away vision it would have seemed, no doubt—of a higher life. But you knew it not; and you can now know nothing more in time. Your probation is at an end; your last opportunity is past. And now that naked soul of yours, dark, hollow-eyed, shrunken with evil passions, is hastening on to its trial. How can it stand in heaven's great assize?

Before parting with the personages whose fortunes have been traced thus far in this history, it is proper to add a few more sentences, telling something of the lot of each.

Soon after the marriage of their daughter, the Winters left Augusta, and bought a place one mile from Innisfel, and between it and Rome. With them Julian and Hattie made their home, yet to the neighbors it was a question of some difficulty to decide whether their home was there or at Innisfel.

Kennon Macdermot and Bertha made their abode at Innisfel, the former having bought land near Mr. Marable's estate.

Will Duke went earnestly to work after the war, and soon re-established his business in Rome. He and his wife and child, on many a quiet Sunday afternoon, found their way out to John Colbert's, where Mennie, with a little Bertha Colbert in her arms, was sure to run out to meet them. Next to his wife and child, John loved his horse and dogs, and still he found his way to Innisfel on many a cold morning, blowing

up Kennon and Julian—when the latter happened to be there—before daybreak, to join him in a fox-chase.

At the solicitation of both Mrs. Winter and Julian, old Chaffey Phipps and Ben Goodson came to live near them. They took a small cottage with several acres of land attached, about half-way between Mr. Winter's residence and Innisfel, but on the estate of the latter. Ben applied himself diligently in cultivating the little farm around their humble abode, and so made a comfortable living for his old aunt and himself. It was a happy day for the old woman when a little Paul Marable met a little Lucy Macdermot at her house, thus paying together their first visit to her. It was very evident on that day, if it had not been before, what these children were to be to her; how much of sunlight it would bring into the old woman's life to see the Marable children of the second generation playing about her door-step.

Malcolm Hillhouse had long loved Flora Blanchard. She had more than once told him that she would never marry. It was her desire to devote her time and means to the amelioration of poverty, to make some hearts brighter and happier by leading them away from themselves to that Unselfish One, who is still in the world reconciling it unto Himself; so would she make some part of God's heritage, wheresoever her lot might be cast, cleaner and cheerier for her having lived in it. To do so most successfully, she thought, she must be untrammelled by domestic ties. Not calmly, nor easily, but only after a long and painful struggle, had Flora determined on living a maiden life. Young, with an ardent temperament, with a nature capable of the strongest attachments, and, more than all, because her heart told her how easy it would be for her to love the brave man who had loved her so long and well, it was no small sacrifice to obey what she then believed to be the mandate of duty, and lead a single life.

After Julian's marriage, Malcolm and Flora returned to Innisfel with the bridal-party. One day Malcolm told to Mrs. Marable the story of his love for Flora. And then, a few days after, Flora, whose confidence in her plans and what she had conceived to be her duty had begun to wane, from daily watching Mrs. Marable's life, and from what she had seen of Mrs. Winter's work in Augusta, in a conversation she had with Mrs. Marable,—it matters not whether it was intention-

ally or inadvertently done,—opened her heart so far as to let the latter see there that which she had once vainly thought had been excluded from it.

Mrs. Marable advised her as she would have advised her own daughter. She thought that Flora might safely follow the promptings of her heart in this matter. Nor did she believe that her duties as a wife would interfere with that work which she had so much at heart. On the contrary, she thought that though they might change her plans to some extent, yet, on the whole, her opportunities for usefulness would be rather augmented than diminished by the change. Malcolm Hillhouse, too, as they both knew, had long ago renounced his infidelity. As he told Mrs. Marable in the conversation already referred to, he was only half a sceptic at the time of his first unexpected visit to Innisfel, when he passed by with the Federal army; and that it was watching the change effected in the life and character of Flora, more than anything else, which began the change in his own convictions. Is this what the religion of Christ teaches? he had asked himself. Is this its effect? Surely there is power in it, and beauty, too. And so, examining the question more candidly than he had been wont to do, it came about that ere the close of the war he was prepared to confess not only to the power and beauty of Christianity, but to its truth. Nor could such a mind as his rest satisfied with mere conviction. Having caught a glimpse of the Great Teacher, of the Moral Redeemer of the world, he sought to get nearer to Him. He had talked with Mrs. Marable on this subject, and with much freedom. She believed him to be already a Christian.

All that Mrs. Marable said found a strong advocate in Flora's heart. And so, when Malcolm Hillhouse again asked her to be his wife, she told him that she would be. It was a year after it was made that she fulfilled this promise at Innisfel.

Ah, Paul, gallant Paul Marable, we started to write the story of thy young life, but it is being writ in heaven. Thy good deeds could not be interred with thy bones at Gettysburg; they live after thee, and will live, bearing fruit, through all time. As we trace these last lines, memory brings back to us thy loved form, and makes us linger. You are standing behind us, as it seems, and, as we turn towards you, a shim-

mering light comes to us from your golden hair. Fain would we draw nearer to grasp again your manly hand, to look again into those brown eyes of yours, those eyes so full of truth and courage, but we may not stop. Yet it is with your name, Paul Marable, last upon our lips, and with your form filling last our vision, that we say farewell to The Marable Family.

THE END.

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